LETTERS

TO A

WIFE,

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

CARDIPHONIA.

Cara Maria, vale! at veniet felicius ævum,
Quando iterum tecum, ſim modo dignus, ero.

LOWTH.

A prudent wife is from the Lord.

PROV. xix. 14.

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LETTERS

TO A

WIFE.

VOL. II.

WRITTEN IN ENGLAND,

From 1755 to 1785.

Thou doſt but take the dying Lamp away,
To bleſs me with thine own unclouded Day!

MRS. ROWE.

Behold I take away from thee, the deſire of thine eyes, with a ſtroke; yet neither ſhalt thou mourn nor weep, neither ſhall thy tears run down.

EZEK. xxiv. 16.

LETTERS

TO A

WIFE.

1755.

WHILE RESIDENT AT LIVERPOOL.

Towceſter, Auguſt 12.

MY DEAREST,

BEFORE this reaches you, your brother will have told you, how eaſy and compoſed he left me. Indeed, I wonder at myſelf. But the Lord has been very gracious to me, and fulfils his promiſe of giving me ſtrength according to my day. My mind is not diſtreſſed. My companions in the coach are civil, and agreeable, in their way; but I had rather have been

alone; for to commune with God and my own heart, would be much more pleaſing, than the empty amuſing chit-chat, I am engaged in at preſent.

I was enabled this morning, to commend you to the Lord's bleſſing, with much comfort. And I have a cheerful hope, that He will raiſe you up in due time; and that we ſhall again have a happy, and thankful meeting. Till then, let us attend to *preſent* duty, and keep cloſe to him, by humble prayer, and a renewed dependance upon the blood of Jeſus. Let us, while the rod is upon us, enquire into the meaning of it, and hear his voice by it: let us bow to his chaſtiſement, and acknowledge that we have rebelled againſt Him, and that he afflicts us far leſs than our iniquities have deſerved—Then we may be aſſured, that though He cauſe grief, He will have compaſſion; and will not only deliver us, but give us to ſee, and to ſay, that it was good for us to have been in trouble. I eſteem it a mercy that you

you found, ſome mitigation of your pain, and ſome ſymptoms of amendment, before I left you. But had I been called away in the hour of your greateſt extremity, I ought to have relied on the Lord's goodneſs, and to have been reſigned to his will. But alas! how weak is my faith!

I am in perfect health, and not uneaſy for you. To be ſure, I think of you continually, but my truſt in God bears me up. I ſhall endeavour to write by every poſt, but if one ſhould paſs me upon the road, I hope you will not be anxious. The Lord is my guard and my guide.

Litchfield, Aug. 13.

THUS far I am brought in ſafety, and am not willing to truſt the poſt any further, and therefore muſt be brief. I met Mr. T. at Daventry, and requeſted him, to ſend you word, how cheerful he found me; fearing you would ſcarcely be-

lieve my own report, unleſs I had ſome one to vouch for me. I ſhould be glad to hear a like account of you, but I know who has the care of you, and what good ground I have to truſt him. I hope my firſt news will be, that your recovery is advancing. Many prayers to this effect I have offered, and am every hour adding to the number, though not with the ſolemnity I could wiſh. For we have hitherto found ſo much company upon the road, and have come in ſo late, that I have not had the opportunity of a ſingle retired room. This is the only inconvenience I have met with. But I know I do not ſerve a hard maſter. I pray to Him, who can hear the breathings of my thoughts, when in the midſt of company, and who is more ready to hear, than I am to aſk.

I hope you, my deareſt, will continue waiting for Him, for from Him only, our help can come. Pray for a praying ſpirit, lay all your hopes and all your fears before

fore Him. In this way, and in no other, peace and comfort will be ſurely found: I recommend you to his bleſſing, and remain, beyond expreſſion,

Yours.

Liverpool, 15 Auguſt.

I CANNOT write much to-night, but I muſt tell you, in few words, all is well. I have met with the uſual kind reception from our dear friends—have done my buſineſs at the Cuſtom-houſe, and received many congratulations. I have a holiday till Monday, and ſhall then enter upon my office. As there are two ſurveyors, and I ſhall be upon the river only every other week, the place is likely to afford me leiſure, which, in its turn, will be as welcome to me as money. Well: ſince the Lord has given me ſo many bleſſings, ſhall I not truſt him throughout? Yes, I thank him, I hope I am war-

ranted to ſay, I can, and do. My thoughts were much interrupted while in the coach; but I had a pleaſant ride indeed, from Warrington hither, and was led to wonder at my many mercies, and to reſign, both you and myſelf, into the hands of God, with much ſatisfaction.

I have received your brother's letter, and I thank him for his punctuality. As the Lord is pleaſed to give you intervals of eaſe, and ſleep, ſo I know he can remove all your pains by a word; and, I truſt he will in the beſt ſeaſon. May he, at preſent, ſanctify his hand, to the increaſing of our faith and patience. Amen!

Liverpool, 20 *Auguſt*.

I HAVE received your ſiſter's obliging letter, with your own dear name, in your own dear hand, at the bottom. A welcome ſight! May I be thankful!

I entered upon buſineſs yeſterday. I find

find my duty is to attend the tides one week, and viſit the ſhips that arrive, and ſuch as are in the river; and the other week to inſpect the veſſels in the docks, and thus alternately the year round. The latter is little more than a ſinecure, but the former requires pretty conſtant attendance, both by day and night. I have a good office, with fire and candle, fifty or ſixty people under my direction, with a handſome ſix-oared boat and a coxſwain, to row me about in form. Mr. W. went with me on my firſt cruize down to the Rock. We ſaw a veſſel, and wandered upon the hills, till ſhe came in. I then went on board, and performed my office with all due gravity. And had it not been my buſineſs, the whole might have paſſed for a party of pleaſure.

To day, the wind blows hard; but you need not be uneaſy about me, at ſuch times. For though my department will lead me to be much upon the river, it is at my option to embark or not, as I find the

weather. I like my ſtation, and ſhall ſoon be maſter of it. Remember that I am in the path of duty, and under the protection of Him, whom the winds and ſeas obey.

I perceive that you have thoughts of removing to Eltham. I pray the Lord to direct you, when and where to go; and that his preſence may be with you, to preſerve you from being hurt by unſuitable company, ſo as to forget the vows you have offered, in the time of your trouble. I hope our late trial will be ſanctified to us, and that while we live, we may have cauſe to ſay, that God is gracious and merciful, even in afflicting us. If your health ſhould be fully reſtored, let us remember, it is but a reprieve. We muſt experience, ſooner or later, another, and a final viſitation, to put an end to all our views, which are bounded with the term of this frail life. Happy ſhall we be, if, when that hour arrives, we ſhall be found ready, and enabled by faith in

our

our Redeemer, to withſtand and overcome the ſhock of the laſt enemy, Death. I hope and truſt we are yet ſpared, that we may recover our ſtrength, before we go hence, and are no more ſeen. I hope, if the Lord is pleaſed to conduct you ſafely to me, and to give us a houſe of our own, we ſhall act, in ſome meaſure, ſuitable to our obligations for ſo many deliverances and reſtorations as we have known; and learn to truſt in his Providence, and no more offend him by our unbelieving fears. I hope, in a few more poſts, to have the pleaſure of a letter, of your own writing. But do not attempt it too ſoon. It is not neceſſary, to make me eaſy. For I have been helped to truſt you to the Lord's care, with few intervals of anxiety ſince I left you.

Liverpool, 24 Auguſt.

THE good hand of God has brought me ſafely through a buſtling, tempeſtuous week. I am to keep watch to-night till about two o'clock. But do not pity me. I ſhall be moſt of the time beſide a good fire, reading, writing, and at intervals praying for you, and myſelf. I hear you are ſtill upon the recovery, for which I wiſh to be thankful. But alas! how much am I otherwiſe! I ſeem almoſt to forget the bitter time we both have lately known, and to be nearly impatient to ſee you here. But do not think me uneaſy; I aſſure you, I am not. But I cannot help feeling that you are not with me. To-morrow my week of reſt begins; then ſome of my friends may expect to hear from me. Of late, I have only had leiſure to write to you. Be cheerful, and dependant. Make uſe of means preſcribed for reſtoring your health,

but do not reſt in them. The bleſſing muſt be from the great Phyſician. To him let us apply for it; and aſcribe to him all the praiſe, if we obtain relief.

Liverpool, 26 Auguſt.

I HOPE I am not capable of undervaluing any of your former letters, but ſurely this now in my hand, is the moſt pleaſing and welcome one, I ever received. May the Lord make me thankful, that you are again able to hold a pen. Your brother repeatedly amuſed me with hopes of your recovery, when, as I now find, you were in the greateſt pain and danger. There is ſomething ſo cloſe and pertinent in the little you have written, that I am filled with joy. I have hardly known you allow, till now, that you were enabled to pray. We may praiſe God, for that pain or ſickneſs, however ſevere, which teaches us, in good earneſt, to call upon Him.

You have been in trouble, you called upon him, and he has delivered you, according to his word. What ſhall we render to Him for all his mercies! Alas, we are poor, and can render nothing of our own. But he will not deſpiſe the efforts of a thankful heart. I wiſh you well to Eltham. I fear the company there, will not be quite ſuitable to the preſent ſtate of your mind. But I truſt you will keep a ſtrict guard over yourſelf, and redouble your prayers to the God of all grace, to preſerve you from evil. Secure ſeaſons for retirement, and let not the world break in upon you, till you have daily committed, and dedicated yourſelf to Him, who has raiſed you from the borders of the grave.

Liverpool, 2 September.

THE ſtrain of your letters now, makes me think light of our temporary ſeparation.

ſeparation. Be not afraid, only believe. The Lord Jeſus, whom you need, and ſeek, invites you, and has declared, Whoſoever cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out. By nature, we all diſlike his goſpel, and ſee no excellence in his perſon that we ſhould deſire him; if this is not your diſpoſition, at preſent, the change already wrought, is his work; and He is not like the unwiſe, inconſiderate builder; what he begins, he is both able and willing to finiſh. You have cauſe to lament the backwardneſs and hardneſs of your heart (the Lord only knows how hard and backward mine is), but let not this caſt you down; He can take away the heart of ſtone. Nor think it ſtrange, if now upon your ſetting your hand to the plough, the enemy ſhould aſſault and trouble you. He will, if permitted, tempt you to ſuſpect the reality of all that you have experienced; he will ſet your ſins in order before you, and perſuade you, if poſſible, to look into yourſelf for qualifications and conditions of acceptance.

acceptance. But anſwer him from the Word of God, and tell him that he is a liar, and the father of it. Chriſt not only has mercy for the unworthy, the ungrateful, and periſhing ſinner, who cannot offer one plea (as from himſelf) why he ſhould be ſpared; but it was purpoſely for thoſe, who anſwer to this character, that he came into the world to die, that He might ſave them to the uttermoſt. He gives qualifications indeed, but he requires none from us. Perhaps this enemy will quote ſcripture againſt you, and preſs ſuch texts upon your mind, as might lead you to form hard concluſions againſt yourſelf. But you will bear this, if you conſider, that he had the impudence to aſſail our Lord himſelf, in this manner, Matt. iv. This Jeſus, whom you ſeek, was in all points tempted and afflicted (ſin excepted) like unto us. He has taſted ſuffering and anguiſh of mind, as well as death, for all his followers. Therefore He is a high prieſt who can have compaſſion upon our infirmities,

infirmities, and is able to ſuccour them that are tempted, and knows what temptations mean.

Go on, my deareſt, I truſt you are in the right way, wait patiently upon the Lord. Caſt not away the confidence you expreſs in his mercy, for in keeping it, you will find a great reward. Greater is He that is with us, than he that is in the world. Changes you muſt expect. The Chriſtian life is a warfare; and though the Captain of our ſalvation, by conquering for us, has ſecured us the final victory, we may be ſorely pinched, and ſometimes wounded, while on the field of battle; but there is healing balm provided, and He will be always near to apply it. There may be fightings without, and fears within, but He is faithful that has promiſed, who alſo will do it.

I have been ſo affected, and engaged, by the former part of your letter, that I have not time to anſwer the other particulars. It is my boarding week again, and the

the weather is bad. But fear not for me, I am in ſafe hands.

Liverpool, Sept. 5.

On the ſtormy night you mention, I was ſafe in bed. I have been but once upon the river this week. The wind blew very hard then, it is true, but I was in no danger. I hope a little practice will teach you to truſt me, with equal eaſe, at all times, and in all places, where my duty calls me.

When you come hither, you will perhaps be more thankful for my being ſettled on ſhore, from what you will obſerve of the anxiety of thoſe who have huſbands, or parents, or children, at ſea, in the way of the approaching war. From ſuch fears you will now be exempted; you will no more have to wait, eight or ten months, in ſuſpenſe. When I think of my ſettlement here, and the manner of it, I ſee the appointment

pointment of Providence ſo good and gracious, and ſuch a plain anſwer to my poor prayers, that I cannot but wonder and adore. I think I have not yet told you, that my immediate predeceſſor in office, Mr. C——, had not the leaſt intention of reſigning his place on the occaſion of his father's death; though ſuch a report was ſpread about the town, without his knowledge, or rather in defiance of all he could ſay, to contradict it. Yet to this falſe report I owe my ſituation. For it put Mr. M. upon an application to Mr. S—, the member for the town, and the very day he received the promiſe in my favour, Mr. C. was found dead in his bed, though He had been in company, and in perfect health, the night before. If I miſtake not, the ſame meſſenger who brought the promiſe, carried back the news of the vacancy to Mr. S—, at Cheſter. About an hour after, the mayor applied for a nephew of his, but though it was but an hour or two, he was too late.

Mr.

Mr. S— had already written, and ſent off the letter, and I was appointed accordingly. Theſe circumſtances appear, to me, extraordinary, though of a piece with many other parts of my ſingular hiſtory. And the more ſo, as by another miſtake, I miſſed the land-waiter's place, which was my firſt object, and which, I now ſee, would not have ſuited us nearly ſo well. I thank God, I can now look through inſtruments, and ſecond cauſes, and ſee his wiſdom and goodneſs immediately concerned, in fixing my lot. He knows our wants and our infirmities. He knows what indulgences may, by his bleſſing, promote our real good, and excite us to praiſe his name; and what thoſe are, which might be ſnares and temptations to us, and prove hurtful. And He knows how to beſtow the one, and to withhold the other. He does all things well!

Liverpool, 7 September.

I WISH you well in the country, and in what part you beſt approve. To be ſure, I ſhould rejoice to ſee you, but I hope I ſhall not be impatient. However, when you are able, the ſooner the better for your own ſake, as bad roads and cold weather are approaching; and all the doctors here, think that ſuch an effectual change of air would ſtrengthen you; but they have already miſtaken your caſe. I wiſh you to come, when you think you can travel as I mentioned, ſo as to hold out four or five hours, ſetting out late and putting up early; if you can thus advance only twenty miles in a day, it will bring you to me in time. But I only give my opinion, I leave you to your own prudence, or rather to the direction of divine Providence, which, I truſt, you will both ſeek and find, and to which I recommend you with a humble confidence.

Many

Many enquire after you, are pleaſed to hear of your amendment, and hope to ſee you ſoon. I ſay, Amen, at the Lord's beſt time. Till then, may he ſanctify our ſeparation, and enable us to truſt his precious promiſes, and tried faithfulneſs.

Liverpool, 9 September.

I WILL not own, as you do, that I am indolent, but I am rather weary. I would be thankful for the account you give of your health, appetite, and colour. I hope your ſtrength will return ſoon, and that I ſhall wait with cheerful patience till it does. When it ſhall pleaſe God to bring us together again, I hope we ſhall ſtrengthen each other's hands. Let us pray for this, while we are yet ſeparated, that we may not be left any more to live to ourſelves, but to him; and may look upwards and forwards, to be prepared for the next trial; for ſooner or later more will come.

The

The town is almoſt in mourning, becauſe the players are gone. On their laſt night, the houſe was filled by four o'clock. Gaiety and diſſipation, of all kinds, increaſe daily here; when this ſpirit will ſtop, I know not. For myſelf, I live eaſy, and retired, three or four hours every day, in my apartment, if buſineſs will permit. I need no diverſions, and walking or reading are my only amuſements, for I keep very little company; but my time is far from hanging upon my hands. I want nothing that this world can afford to amend my ſituation, but to have my deareſt M. with me, and for this, the Lord's time will be the beſt.

Liverpool, 12 September.

I SHALL take care to write upon large paper, as you deſire. But I believe the ſmaller may ſuffice for to-day. Moſt of my leiſure this week will be taken up with

with Mr. Wh—d, which, as it is an occaſional interruption, and from which I hope both for comfort and benefit, I think you will excuſe. He came to town on Wedneſday, preached on that evening, twice yeſterday, and ſo will continue preaching twice a day, while he ſtays. We ſhall try to keep him till Monday, though he ſays he never was in a place where he had ſo little encouragement to ſtay, as here. I made myſelf known to him the firſt night; went to ſee him, and converſed with him the next morning, when he invited me to ſupper. I went home with him from the preaching, and ſtaid till ten o'clock. So we are now very great, and very thankful I would be, for the privilege. May the Lord yet give him to ſee, that his labour of love amongſt us, is not in vain. But ſurely this is the moſt unconcerned town, for its ſize, in the kingdom. I hope he is ſent to awaken, ſome of the people, out of their falſe peace. However he is, as he was formerly, very helpful to me. He warms

my

my heart, makes me more indifferent to cares and croſſes, and ſtrengthens my faith. I find you are making acquaintance with Mr. M. Well, go on, I hope you will leave London ſoon, or you will be thought as ſingular, as your huſband. To ſpeak ſeriouſly, it makes my heart glad to ſee in you one mark of a real believer, in that you love the miniſters and people of the Lord, and are not offended with the goſpel, which is a ſtumbling-block, and rock of offence to many. May he carry on his work, and build you up in knowledge, faith, and much aſſurance. Amen. Think of me, as always thinking of you, and praying for you.

Liverpool, 16 *September*.

Mr. W— left us yeſterday morning; I accompanied him on foot a little way out of town, till the chaiſe overtook us.

us. I have had more of his company than would have come to my ſhare at London, in a twelvemonth. I heard him preach nine times, ſupped with him three times, and dined with him once at Mr. F—'s, and on Sunday he dined with me. I cannot ſay how much I eſteem him, and hope, to my dying day, I ſhall have reaſon to bleſs God on his behalf. Having never been here before but one night, he was not known, or regarded, by the faſhionable folks, though ſeveral of them went to hear him. But many of the poorer ſort, are enquiring after him, with tears.

I commenced acquaintance yeſterday with a good man, who lately loſt his wife in child-bed, the firſt year. He is the very picture of ſorrow. I attempt to comfort him, though I ſucceed but poorly. It is only God who can give comfort, in ſuch a caſe. Yet I think few can be more capable of ſympathizing with him, than myſelf. What I have lately gone through, is freſh upon my mind. And why was

not

not the event the same to me? Every way I am distinguished. My prayers turn much upon the thoughts of our future settlement. It will require both prudence, and resolution, to set out right from the first; but if we ask of God, it shall be given us. I would have you gradually prepare our sister, for such a house as it will be our duty, and privilege, to keep; where God may be worshipped, and nothing practised or permitted, that is contrary to our Christian profession.

Liverpool, 19 *September*.

I FOLLOW you in my mind to Eltham, Bromley, &c.; though I know not the country. May the Lord be with you wherever you go, make known to you his covenant, and assure you of an unalienable interest in it.

I thank you for the account of Mr. B.'s sermon. You will observe, the prin-

cipal effects, or properties, of Abraham's faith, by which he walked with God, were humility, and integrity. He humbled himſelf before the Lord in ſecret, claiming no higher title than duſt and aſhes. And He ſtood up boldly, as his avowed, devoted ſervant, before men. Let us imitate him. I little doubt but he was thought ſingular, and perhaps laughed at, and ſo probably ſhall we; but I truſt grace will make us ſcorn proof, and not ſuffer us to be in the number of thoſe, who are aſhamed of the Lord Jeſus, and his goſpel. No, I hope he will enable us to glory in the croſs, and to endure the oppoſition we may meet with, as ſeeing *Him* who is inviſible, who, when upon earth, ſubmitted to be laughed to ſcorn himſelf, for us. He, having borne our reproach, has a juſt right to require that we ſhould be ready, and willing, to bear reproach for him.

If the preſent fair weather continues, the road will be good to Warrington, where

where it will ſuit me rather better, to meet you. But if you come by Cheſter, I can bring you by water in a pilot-boat, very cleverly. Be ſure, that for the ſake of ſaving a little expence or time, you do not overact your ſtrength. I could go on for an hour, in giving you fooliſh directions, and precautions, for your journey; but after all, it is beſt to leave you to the care of the divine Providence, and to ſubmit the method of your route, to your own judgment.

Liverpool, 23 *September*.

I CANNOT gueſs the reaſons which you ſay, taken together, will induce you to come by the ſtage. You may, perhaps, judge beſt, being upon the ſpot, and I would not overrule your inclinations. But as I know my own weakneſs, I am afraid it will be an uneaſy journey to me, at leaſt. As I have ſaid before, I wiſh to

truſt you in the Lord's hands, but when we have the choice of means, it is our duty to conſult Providence. Aſk the firſt friend you meet, which is beſt adapted to your circumſtances, as juſt recovering from illneſs. To travel from three in the morning till eight or nine at night, in a heavy coach with mixed company, or from eight in the morning till five in the evening, in a chaiſe with your ſiſter?

I pray the Lord to direct, and ſtrengthen you, and to give me a joyful ſight of you again. My poor weak heart ſometimes rebels, and I almoſt complain, becauſe you are not yet able to come. But this humour ſeldom laſts a full minute, before my thoughts recur to the day when I left London, and that ſilences me at once. What a heap of guineas (had I poſſeſſed them), would I then have given, to be aſſured that you ſhould, by this time, be ſo much reſtored as you are? Alas! I am ſtill a ſinful inconſiſtent creature, but the Lord is merciful, beyond meaſure, to us both.

I go

I go on making uſeful acquaintance. The Lord honours me in the eyes of his own people, which is the honour I moſt deſire. And though ſome of the wags of my acquaintance, have given me the name of young Wh ——— d, from my conſtant attendance upon him when he was here, it does not grieve me; and perhaps if they would ſpeak the truth, they do not think the worſe of me in their hearts. I find I cannot be conſiſtent, and conſcientious in my profeſſion, without incurring the charge of ſingularity. I ſhall endeavour to act with prudence, and not give needleſs offence; but I hope I ſhall never more be aſhamed of the goſpel.

Liverpool, 26 September.

I THANK you for thanking me, for the bill I ſent you. But do not ſuppoſe I give it you. I expect to be repaid—I recant—I own myſelf in debt

over head and ears (as they ſay), to you ſtill. I muſt not talk of repayment till I am clear. But I think, to do you real ſervice, I could as readily part with my life. May the Lord unite us, ſtill more cloſely, in his faith and fear!

When I firſt aſked Mrs. D— to hear Mr. Wh——d, ſhe could hardly give me a civil anſwer (though otherwiſe ſhe is very obliging and reſpectful). But, curioſity, or a better motive, prevailing, ſhe went on the ſecond day. She returned very well diſpoſed, and aſked me, if I had any of his printed ſermons. I lent her a volume. She went to hear him again, and became his great admirer. She herſelf firſt propoſed my aſking him to dinner; and his behaviour there, confirmed her in her reſpect for him. I invited four or five Chriſtian friends to partake of his company. She provided a very handſome dinner, and when I ſpoke of the additional expence, ſhe ſaid, ſhe was very willing to bear it; but I do not intend

that

that ſhe ſhall. She has borne the reproach and laugh of many of her neighbours, very well. They call her a methodiſt, and ſhe ſeems as eaſy under the charge, as I am. So we ſee, very unlikely things may be brought about.

Liverpool, 30 *September*.

I MUST tranſcribe part of a letter from Mr. W——. "I have ſeveral times "had the pleaſure of converſing with "Mrs. N——. God has been pleaſed to "give her a great meaſure of your ſpi-"rit," (ſo he writes). "She is neither "afraid nor aſhamed to own her profeſ-"ſion. After a Sermon of Mr. B—, on "Pſ. xxv. 14, ſhe told me, that the hear-"ing of the great phyſician had done her "more good than all her other medi-"cines." Thus far he. The Lord help you to go on, and to increaſe! Now me-thinks I am happy indeed! Now my

higheſt wiſhes are anſwered, if my deareſt M. is partaker of the ſame hope with myſelf. How pleaſant will all the future comforts, and bleſſings, which the Lord may be pleaſed to afford us, prove, if we can diſcern them conveyed to us, in the channel of redeeming love! How pleaſant will it be, to look beyond them all, and, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks on another occaſion, not to think that we have attained any thing, as yet, comparatively ſpeaking, even when we have all we can wiſh for, but ſtill to preſs forward in our hopes and views, towards the prize of our high calling in a better world, where pleaſure will be without abatement, and without end.

Since you were ſo ready to believe me, when I ſaid, I had not been well, pray why could you not take my word about my recovery? For ſhame, my deareſt. Theſe fears and diſtruſtful thoughts paſſed with us once, but we muſt aim above them now. Let us have no more idolatry, if we

we value each other's peace, or are willing to avoid ſuch fiery trials as we have lately known. However, whether you can believe me or not, I muſt tell you again, that I am in good health. The Lord be with you, where you are, and in your journey, when you move this way; and may we truſt and ſerve him, according to what he has done for us!

Liverpool, 3 *October*.

I AM not ſorry that you complain of your heart, for ſince our hearts will be bad, it is a mercy to be ſenſible that they are ſo. Nor will I contradict you, when you ſay, that you are ungrateful, and inſenſible to the Lord's goodneſs; only remember that you are ſo in common with others, and that there is not a perſon upon earth who knows himſelf, but muſt make the ſame complaint. I can find no words more ſuitable to my own caſe, than thoſe which you make uſe of, only

ſubſtituting your name for my own. *I delight, admire, and love to hang upon, every ſentence, and every action of my deareſt M. and yet, how wanting, and how cold am I, to the gracious Author of all our mercies, to whom we owe each other, our happy affection, and all the ſatisfaction that flows from it.* He might juſtly have parted us long ago for my ingratitude; He might have ſhut out my prayers in your late viſitation; but He has raiſed you up to a new life. Oh! that it may be ſo indeed!

I ſhall endeavour to temper my zeal with prudence. I am far from propoſing that you ſhall keep company with waſhet-women, in this world. (Hereafter, I doubt not, we ſhall be glad to join with ſuch.) The religious acquaintance which I wiſh to cultivate, with any degree of intimacy, will, I think, be confined to three or four families, all of whom, are better to paſs in the world, than ourſelves. And who, though perhaps they do not aim, in all things, at the top of the polite taſte,

are ſufficiently well-bred, to be received as viſitants any where, if their principles did not hinder. But this you may be aſſured of, that a conſiſtent profeſſion of real religion, will carry the appearance of ſingularity in this town; and unleſs you can confine yourſelf wholly to the gay and careleſs, and go all their lengths, you will certainly have a bit of the croſs to carry, and muſt prepare yourſelf to be thought altered for the worſe, by ſome of your acquaintance. I much more fear our being cowardly, than imprudent. But if we are of the number of thoſe, whom the Lord will not be aſhamed to own in the great day, he will give us a meaſure of grace, that we ſhall not be aſhamed to own his cauſe and people, in the midſt of this crooked, and perverſe generation. But, as you ſay, there is *a way* of doing things, I ſhall try to carry it handſomely to others. It is not neceſſary to affront or quarrel with any who have treated us civilly; but experience will convince you, that the leſs we are connected with worldly people, the

better. And as the Lord by his providence has placed us in a ſtate of entire independance; and there is no conſideration of trade or cuſtomers, to prevent us from living, in all points, juſt as we pleaſe, I hope we ſhall judge better, than to ſacrifice our happineſs and true intereſt, to an empty ſound.

But I perceive that you, likewiſe, have picked up, a fine ſet of methodiſtical acquaintance. Should your aunt know it, ſhe would ſet you down as almoſt ruined. But I, who love you better than a thouſand aunts could do, congratulate you upon the acquiſition. You may now ſee, by the examples before you, that true religion has nothing in it of the unſociable or gloomy; but is, on the contrary, the ſource of peace, cheerfulneſs, and good-humour. If, as you ſay, you love good people, he who has inclined your heart to love them here, will give you a portion with them, both here and hereafter. Upon this ſingle evidence, St. John grounds an aſſurance of heaven, ſaying, We know

that

that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. We may, indeed, love a good man upon other considerations; but to love him because he is good, because we think we see the image of our Saviour in him, and to love him most, for the best parts of his character, is not possible, till we have grace in our hearts; for till then, we have an enmity to the Gospel. And though this is not always visible, and active, in persons of mild and gentle dispositions, the fartheſt such can go, is to say, I love the man, because he is of a good life and behaviour, but he has some strange, unaccountable whims, and prejudices.

Liverpool, 5 October.

I BELIEVE you do not guess how I am disappointed, when I receive only half a side from you. Indeed, if writing is inconvenient to you, I could be content

with half a line; but your excuſe ſeems to ſuppoſe you are afraid of wearying me: for you ſay, I ſhorten this, merely becauſe my laſt was ſo long. Well, I hope a few more poſts will bring us together; in the mean time, let me have as much of you, as you can conveniently commit to paper. I fear, left by the preſſing manner of my writing, you ſhould ſometimes think I wrong you by a ſuſpicion, that you will ſtay a day longer than needful. But indeed it is my happineſs to believe that your heart is as much here, as mine is at London. I cannot make you a more expenſive compliment. But alas! whither am I running? I forget my own duty and yours. I fear it is of the number of our great ſins, that our hearts cleave ſo cloſe to each other, and ſo little to the Lord; that we are ſo thoughtful about the future, and ſo negligent of the preſent. It is, at leaſt, thus with me. I ſtill feel that you are my idol, and though the Lord has lately afflicted you for my

ſake,

ſake, and is now raiſing you up for me again, as it were from the grave, I am not yet inſtructed.

Liverpool, 7 October.

I CANNOT expreſs what I felt to-day, while I was reading your dear letter, which informs me, that you hope to ſet out next week; but you can gueſs for me. Ten thouſand thoughts crowded upon me at once. The remembrance of that mournful, painful week, at London, when I could only behold, and ſhare, and by ſharing, increaſe your diſtreſs, without procuring you the leaſt help or eaſe, (which I hope I ſhall never forget while I can remember any thing)—the ſituation in which we parted, when the Lord enabled me to hope againſt hope—the joy to think you now recovered from a moſt dangerous illneſs—the expectation of ſeeing you in a few days, and the former experience I have had,

had, of what a happy meeting with you includes—all theſe different emotions of joy and ſorrow, of love and gratitude, took poſſeſſion of my ſoul at once. And is it ſo indeed? Shall I receive you ſoon as reſtored from the grave; and have all my pleaſures heightened, by the contraſt of my late trials? Oh! then what ſhall I render to the Lord for all his goodneſs? Could money or friends have helped us, you would have been relieved ſooner: but there was no power, in heaven or earth, that could reſtore eaſe to you, or peace to me, but God alone. To him, therefore, be the glory and the praiſe; all the glory and all the praiſe! And let us aim to declare his goodneſs, not merely in ſecret, or to each other, but in the whole courſe of our lives, by chooſing what is pleaſing to him, and avoiding what he hates. And eſpecially, let us watch and pray againſt ſetting up our reſt here below, and miſplacing that regard upon each other, which is only due to him. May we be

enabled

enabled to commit our dearest concerns, and have recourse, in every trouble, to Him, who has so often heard our prayers, and done us good. And oh! that we may have that moderation, both in affection and practice, towards earthly things, which becomes those who profess themselves strangers and sojourners here, and who look for a better inheritance, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Surely, it was our own folly, that brought our late distress upon us. We had lived too much to ourselves, and had not glorified, as we ought, the God in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways.

When Hezekiah was sick, nigh unto death, the Lord raised him up, and prolonged his life fifteen years. But we are told, that he rendered not according to the benefit he had received, 2 Chron. xxxii. Alas! How strongly does this charge lie against us! How often have we been restored to each other, after long and

dangerous

dangerous ſeparations! How wonderfully have we been preſerved from innumerable evils, to which, in ſuch a world as this, we are hourly expoſed! And yet, it has now pleaſed God to give us a proſpect of paſſing our days together, comfortably, and free from many inconveniencies, which formerly affected us. But to keep us from growing too ſecure, juſt at the time He did this, He laid his hand upon you, and by one ſtroke, brought us both down to the ground. Now again, He is returning in mercy, bringing us health, peace, and joy. Let us hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it. For if we come together, yet again, in a thoughtleſs, ungrateful, ſelf-ſeeking temper, he can again ſeparate us, in a way that we are not aware of. But, I hope, and pray, we ſhall be enabled to ſerve him from gratitude, and from a conſideration of the great things He has done for us, rather than from a principle of ſlaviſh fear.

If you are really afraid of being a hypocrite,

pocrite, it is a good sign that you are not one. For the hypocrite is secure and confident, and has no suspicion of a mistake. But the best persons upon earth must own, that though, through grace, they are not hypocrites, there is too much hypocrisy remaining in them. Their real and fundamental aim is, the glory of God; but wretched, sinful self-will creeps in, and taints their best performances. However, our comfort is, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. What a great word is that little word All! not only from sins of one kind, or of one degree, but of all kinds, and of all degrees, when we apply to it, in a truly humble, and repenting spirit.

I was not angry with you for doubting of my health, (how do you think I can be angry with you at all?) I only meant to caution you against an overweening distrustful care, which answers no good end, but is a species of sinful unbelief. And I foresee, that against my judgment and experience,

perience, and notwithſtanding all my grave admonitions to you, I ſhall too often offend in the ſame way, and you will have frequent occaſions of giving me, the ſame advice. But this is a part of our duty, and our privilege, to exhort and admoniſh each other, leſt we ſhould be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.

I was laſt night with Mr. and Mrs. ——. I think you will like their acquaintance. They are ſober, ſenſible people, and ſeem very happy in each other. What a pity, that the one thing needful ſhould be wanting, when nothing elſe ſeems to be wanting! But ſo it was with us, once, and it may be better with them, hereafter.

1757.

Liverpool, 2 February.

MY DEAREST M.

I WOULD not give you occaſion to think, that the return of your birth-day, is leſs intereſting to me at preſent, than it was ſeven ago; or that my concern in it, gives me leſs pleaſure, now I am with you in Liverpool, than when I was exiled from you on the coaſt of Africa. It is a part of my happineſs, and demands my daily acknowledgment and praiſe to God, that my regard for you is no more capable of being weakened by time, than heretofore by abſence. You will not expect me to addreſs you in the ſtrain of modern politeneſs, but I am perſuaded that you will favourably accept what I may write, becauſe you will approve of my motive, and my ſincerity.

I often wonder at the ill-timed feſtivity

and

and gaiety, with which the return of a birth-day, is uſually obſerved. Multitudes, who with reſpect to the paſt, can find little to make them reflect with pleaſure, on their having been brought into the world; and with reſpect to the future, tremble in the midſt of all their parade, at the ſerious apprehenſion of death; yet agree to drown both the paſt and the future, in noiſe and diſſipation. For my own part, I ſee ſufficient reaſon to make my birth-day, more eſpecially, a ſeaſon of ſerious reflection. And I recommend the practice to you. For what is the language of a birth-day? Has it not a warning voice, to remind us that another year, of our time and opportunities, is cloſed upon us (time and talents for which we are accountable, and ſeaſons which cannot be recalled), and that death and eternity have advanced nearer to us by the ſtride of a whole year? And therefore, I judge, that a birth-day is a very improper day for mortals to be frolickſome. To thoſe whoſe hearts are deeply

deeply engaged in the things of this world, I ſhould imagine the very thought of the occaſion, would be, (like the hand-writing on the wall to Belſhazzar, Dan. v.) ſufficient to put a full ſtop to their feaſt, and to turn their joy to heavineſs. But ſuch is our depravity, that till grace touches the heart, the moſt obvious, and moſt intereſting truths, can make no proper impreſſion upon us. But I ſeem to forget that I am writing to you.

I am no enemy to joy; and I am ſure, the real Chriſtian, who has peace with God, and in his own conſcience, has both the beſt title to joy, and the beſt diſpoſition for it. I invite you to rejoice; but let it be in the right way, and in the right manner. *Rejoice in the Lord, and rejoice with trembling.* Let us learn from the firſt, the ſure grounds we have for rejoicing; and from the ſecond, the many conſiderations, which ſhould correct and qualify our joy, that it may not deviate into a wrong channel, and become ſinful and dangerous.

I ſay,

I say, Rejoice in the Lord. I congratulate you on your birth-day, not to give you a vain complacence in yourself, but to lead you back, to the time, and circumstances of your birth, that you may reflect on the goodness of God. You were born of creditable and affectionate parents, in easy circumstances, with a body neither diseased nor deformed, and a mind endued with rational faculties, with a soul formed for immortality, capable of loving and serving God here, and being happy with him for ever. Your lot was cast in a land favoured with the Gospel, without which, all temporal blessings would have been of little worth, but if you take them together, and compare your own state, with that of millions of your fellow-creatures, what great reasons have you to rejoice, in this first view? But I would lead your thoughts forward from thence step by step, through every succeeding year, to this day; through infancy, childhood, and especially youth, that dangerous

gerous period, in which ſuch numbers make ſhipwreck of their hopes and proſpects. Muſt you not ſay, Surely mercy and goodneſs have followed me all the days of my life? What ſorrows, what ſickneſſes, what ſnares, have you either been exempted from, or preſerved ſafely through? How many, within the circle of your own acquaintance, have been cut ſhort, before they reached your term of life? How many, who are yet living, are ſuffering from evils to which you are equally expoſed? I make no ſcruple to number our happy marriage, among the bleſſings for which you ſee cauſe to be thankful. That it pleaſed God to bring us together, to bleſs us with a true affection, to reſtore us to each other after long ſeparations, to recover us from long ſickneſſes, to fix us in our preſent ſituation, and above all, to direct our hopes beyond the preſent world for our chief happineſs. This is the crowning mercy. If the Lord has ſhewn you and me, thoſe things which

are hidden from many of the wiſe and prudent; if we know our diſeaſe and our remedy, that we are ſinners, helpleſs and hopeleſs in ourſelves, but ſinners for whom a ſure, and free ſalvation, is provided in Jeſus Chriſt, and that we have ground to hope that we are intereſted in the pardons, and promiſes, of the goſpel, that the hairs of our head are numbered, and that all things are working for our good. That God will be our ſun and ſhield here, and our portion for ever. If theſe things are ſo, we may well rejoice, but ſtill it muſt be in the Lord; for all our good, preſent, and hoped for, is from him alone.

But I ſay, ſecondly, Rejoice with trembling. Our joy, in this world, cannot be unmixed. There are unavoidables, which, though they cannot take it from us, will and ought to temper it; ſuch as theſe—An ingenuous ſenſe of our unſuitable returns for ſo many, and great mercies. May God preſerve us from that terror of mind on account of ſin, which, ſooner or later, will

will be the portion of thoſe who know him not. We need not be diſtreſſed, for though we have ſinned, Chriſt has died for ſinners, and is able to ſave to the uttermoſt. Yet, certainly, we have much cauſe to grieve, and be aſhamed, that we have lived ſo long to ſo little purpoſe, that we have received ſo much and rendered ſo little, and that after all our experience and reſolutions, we are ſtill ſo inactive, and unſtable, in his ſervice. The ſnares, temptations, and enemies around us, may make us thoughtful, if they do not make us tremble. Theſe would ſurely prevail againſt us at laſt, were not the Lord on our ſide. We may almoſt tremble likewiſe, for the ſins of thoſe among whom we live. Lot choſe to reſide in Sodom, becauſe it was a pleaſant country, and well watered; but the ſins of the inhabitants, ſoon made him forget the advantages of the place. His righteous ſoul was vexed, from day to day, by their ungodly deeds. And ſo ſhall we feel, if we

have a due regard for the glory of God, the love of Chriſt, and the ſouls of our neighbours. We have likewiſe cauſe to tremble, when we think of the judgments that ſeem at preſent, hanging over a ſinful, inſenſible nation. We have juſt reaſon to fear, leſt mercy ſo long deſpiſed, ſhould be withdrawn. Let us, like good Eli, tremble for the ark of God. And in this view we may tremble for ourſelves, for we have contributed our part, to the filling up the meaſure of national iniquity. We have neither borne that teſtimony againſt ſin in public, nor mourned for it in ſecret, as we ought. And though, I truſt, it ſhall be well with us at laſt, who can tell what ſcenes of diſtreſs, and difficulty, we may be appointed to ſtruggle through, while we are upon earth? And therefore we ſhould tremble, while we rejoice.

I could enlarge my homily, would time, and paper permit. In brief, you have, to my comfort, been ſpared to finiſh another year. The event of the next is uncertain.

I would

I would therefore exhort you and myself, to live this year, as though it would, as though it certainly were to be our last. It may possibly prove so. Let us renew our application to the throne of grace, and the blood of sprinkling. Let us pray that we may be always ready, that our hearts may be withdrawn from worldly things, and be fixed, trusting in the Lord. And then, come life, come death, let peace be continued, or troubles be multiplied, nothing shall be able greatly to move us.

1758.

Warrington, 13 December.

MY DEAREST,

THUS far it is well, and I truſt ſhall be to the end. The weather is fine, the roads good, the horſe free, and eaſy. He has not ſtarted once, though he ſometimes raiſes his ears.

Now and then, I feel ſome twinges at being forced from you, though but for a ſeaſon, but the cauſe makes amends. Three or four weeks will, I hope, re-unite us; and then, one hour will repay the pains of abſence. Let us not wiſh away the interval, but make the moſt of it, for it will ſoon be over. The new ſcene of life which appears to be opening before us, is very important. We have need to pray earneſtly, conſtantly, for each other, and for ourſelves. Make much of the means of grace, reſerve ſeaſons for retirement.

Endeavour

Endeavour to avoid the company by which you cannot improve, and to improve by that which you cannot avoid. Adieu. May the peace of God here, prepare you for his glory hereafter. Amen!

Hunſlett, 15 December.

I HAVE received my title from Mr. C. and ſhall proceed to-morrow. I can hardly be more happy while ſeparated from you, than at preſent. Dear Mrs. A. who is well, is ſitting by me upon her huſband's knee, while poor I, am like a turtle without my mate. But I truſt my time will come again. Till then I can think, write, and pray, I can repeat your name a thouſand times; and therefore I look at them now, with a pleaſure unmixed with envy. But I muſt not triſle. I expect ſoon to aſſume a character, which ought, if poſſible, to wean me from every thought that terminates in ſelf, or time.

Pray for me, my deareſt, my hour of trial is at hand; a ſolemn hour, which will call for all my faith, ſtrength, and zeal. But the needful ſupply is near. In our Lord, there is a fulneſs of grace, a ſufficiency for me, for you, and for all that ſeek. May he give you that peace which paſſeth all underſtanding, may he bleſs us while apart, and join us again to our mutual comfort, here for a time, and hereafter for ever!

London, 22 December.

Well!—All is over for the preſent, and I have only cheated you out of a journey to London. Laſt night I waited on the Biſhop of Cheſter. He received me with great civility; but he ſaid, as the title was out of his dioceſe, he could do me no effectual ſervice, and that the notice was much too ſhort. However, he counterſigned my teſtimonials, and directed

rected me to Dr. N—, the Archbiſhop's chaplain. On him I waited this morning. He referred me to the ſecretary, and from him I received the ſofteſt refuſal imaginable. He had repreſented my affair to the Archbiſhop, but his Grace was inflexible in ſupporting the rules and canons of the church, &c.

Had my eye been raiſed no higher than to his Grace of York, I ſhould have been diſpleaſed and diſconcerted; but I am in the hands of the great Lord of all. He has been pleaſed to prove me, whether my ſurrender to his will was ſincere, or not, and He has enabled me to ſtand the trial. As ſure as our names are John and Mary, you will find that the time, and expence of this journey, will not be thrown away. I am quite ſatisfied and eaſy. The Lord will make all theſe things ſubſervient to our good. He can open another door in a minute. I think to go down to Chatham on Monday, and to ſet out for Leeds about Thurſday. It may be the ſecond

week in January, before I reach home, though I long to ſee you, with all the eagerneſs of a lover. Take care of your health, eſpecially the health of your ſoul.

Chatham, 23 December.

I CAME hither, with your brother, on Saturday. Our family are all well; and well pleaſed with my deſign: only ſome of them expreſs a little of their cares, and fears, about money-matters. Mamma had a pleaſing proſpect that I ſhould be curate to Mr. S—, that you might be near her again. But this proſpect laſted only half an hour, for, upon enquiry, I found he was provided. I hear Mr. Hervey is dying, ſo that I cannot ſee him in this world. You may truſt me, to make the beſt of my way home. I ſeem, already, to have been from you, the term of an African voyage; and ſtill find, as heretofore, that nothing can make amends for

the want of your company. Though the Lord permits difficulties and hinderances to ariſe for the trial of our faith and patience, I cannot believe, that he either diſapproves, or will finally diſappoint, my deſire to ſerve him. I ſurrendered myſelf to his diſpoſal without reſerve, and I cannot wonder, nor ought I to complain, if He takes me at my word, and puts my ſincerity to the proof. Mr. B— is pleaſed with the diſintereſtedneſs I have been enabled to ſhew, and ſays he is perſuaded we ſhall be no loſers. He doubts not but the Lord will give us more than He will call us to part with. Be this as it may, as to dirty money; if He gives us grace and peace, if He continues our affection, and preſerves us to each other, if He is pleaſed to be with us in every trouble, and exigence, if he affords us a clear evidence of our intereſt in a heavenly inheritance, if He favours us with a calm, believing acquieſcence in his will, if He honours us with uſefulneſs in this life, and crowns us

with glory in a better—we ſhall ſurely have no cauſe for complaint. If once we reach heaven, we ſhall not think that we did, or ſuffered, too much for Him who loved us, and gave himſelf for us. One glance of that happineſs which ſhall endure for ever, will abundantly overpay us for all the cares, and fears, we experienced during our pilgrimage.

I cannot expreſs the ſatisfaction your dear letter gave me, in finding you ſo eaſy, and reſigned, upon the event of my late attempt. This is a mercy I would, if neceſſary, or poſſible, or lawful, have purchaſed at the price of a limb. Nothing diſquieted me from the firſt of my deſign, but the fear of involving you in difficulties, or cauſing you uneaſineſs. But in this, as in a thouſand inſtances, I have found the Lord a hearer of prayer. And I hope, and believe, he has a bleſſing in ſtore for you, upon this account. You know me too well to ſuſpect me of flattery, I give you my plain advice, when I think it needful.

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It is a proof of my affection. But neither ought I to withhold deserved praise. You have, from the first rise of this affair, acted a part, which perhaps few of your sex could equal. To make such sacrifices, so cheerfully, and upon such slender grounds, is not common. I can only say, it has not been lost upon me. My primary thanks, indeed, are due to the Lord, who gave you to me, and who gave you every qualification that could engage my heart, and gratify my utmost wishes in a wife. My next, are due to you. The whole term of our union, forms a series of many a proof of recollected love, as Thomson speaks. But nothing has more strongly enhanced my love, and gratitude to you, than your conduct when we were last at Leeds, and ever since. Take courage, hold on, the end will answer your expectations. I can say nothing as to particulars, but in general, I am sure that none who put their trust in God, shall be finally ashamed. I suppose you have your fits of

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fear and unbelief. I have likewiſe ſeverely felt them at times. But mind them not, or turn them to advantage, by making them occaſions of more frequent, and earneſt prayer. For it is written, Call upon me in trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me. Let us be diligent in the means of grace; theſe are the paths in which the Lord has commanded us to walk, and where he has promiſed to meet us, and bleſs us. The enemy would fain keep us from them, or make them burdenſome; and he has too often prevailed. Should not experience make us wiſe? Has it not always been beſt with us, when we have been moſt diligent in prayer, moſt attentive to the ſcriptures, and moſt diſengaged from the world, and from trifling company? Have we not found a vanity in every thing but religion, eſpecially when trouble has ſtared us in the face, or when pain, or ſickneſs, have taken hold of us? Why then ſhould we be fooled and deceived

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any more? Let us return to the Lord; there is forgiveneſs with him for the paſt, ſupplies ſuited to every need, none that come to him ſhall be caſt out, none that reſt on him ſhall be overthrown, none that love, and ſerve him, ſhall be unrewarded.

1759.

Loughborough, 3 January.

I HOPE this will come in time, either to prevent, or relieve, your uneaſineſs on my account. Whatever you have ſuffered, or may ſuffer for me, you ſhall be made amends, ſo far as gratitude will paſs for payment, and ſo far as the ſtudy of my life can promote your ſatisfaction. If you have had fears for me, they were needleſs. And I hope you will in time learn to truſt me, and all your concerns, to God, who careth for us. I left London on Saturday about ten, but ſoon found I had a very indifferent horſe. I have been obliged to travel his pace, for he poſitively refuſes to travel mine; and though I tell him how impatient I am to ſee my dear M. he will not move one foot the faſter. When I came to Barnet, I demurred about the road; at length I turned to the right, not knowing

knowing when I might have ſo good an opportunity of ſeeing the perſons, I mentioned in my laſt.

I put up at Welling, ſent a note to Dr. Young, and received for anſwer, that he would be glad to ſee me. I ſpent an hour with him. His converſation was agreeable, and much anſwerable to what I expected from the Author of the Night Thoughts. He ſeemed likewiſe pleaſed with me. It would have ſurpriſed you to hear how I let my tongue run, before this great man. He approved my deſign of entering the miniſtry, and ſaid many encouraging things upon the ſubject; and when he diſmiſſed me, deſired that I would never paſs near his houſe, without calling upon him.

I ſpent Sunday at Everton, and am glad I went, though it will coſt me two days more abſence from you. The firſt five miles from thence into the York road, were, I think, the worſt I had ever rid, or ſeen. I was ſometimes in fear for myſelf,

ſelf, but more frequently for my poor horſe, leſt I muſt have left him ſticking in the clay, as a memorandum of my having paſſed that way. When I put up at night, I found that I had come, about ſix miles beyond the place, where I ſhould have turned off. It was a poor day's journey, but eighteen miles in all, and ſix of them out of the way. On Tueſday I was adviſed to keep on ſixteen miles further, and I ſhould find a turnpike road to Leiceſter. If I had miſſed this turning likewiſe, I ſhould have miſſed ſome trouble and trepidation. I had thirty-three miles croſs road to go, and found much of it, a croſs road indeed. Though the worſt pieces of it, if taken together, were not above ten miles, I would rather go an hundred miles round, than travel it again. I am ſtill a hundred miles from you, but I have no more kind friends, nor croſs roads, to detain me. Thank the Lord for preſerving me in health, and ſafety. My horſe is recovered from his fright,

fright, and ſeems in better order than when I left London. I am likely to jog on by myſelf, for if any perſons were going my way, they would hardly have patience to wait my horſe's motions, nor would he mend his pace to pleaſe any body. But I truſt I am not alone, nor do I often feel a want of any company but yours. Continue to pray for me. I truſt we ſhall live to ſee the hand of God overruling every thing for our benefit; and that every ſeparation, inconvenience, or expence, occaſioned by a deſire of promoting his glory, ſhall be well made up to us, in the beſt time.

Hunſlett, 17 May.

I CANNOT tell you, how often your dear name has been in my mouth, ſince I left you, nor how earneſtly, and frequently, I commend you to the Lord's bleſſing. May he teach us to improve theſe ſhort, occaſional ſeparations. When I am abſent from you, I moſt ſenſibly feel

feel how dear you are to me; and what a heavy trial I ſhould have, if God was to take you wholly from me. I ought to believe, that He will enable me to bear, whatever he may appoint, becauſe ſuch is his promiſe; but at preſent it ſeems, that a blow ſo near to my heart, would be long, and deeply felt, in every other circumſtance of life, and that I ſhould find pleaſure in nothing, but in bemoaning my loſs. I doubt not, but you have ſimilar thoughts, upon the ſuppoſition of my being removed. May we therefore learn, in the firſt place, to be thankful that we have been ſo often reſtored, and ſo long preſerved, to each other; and that our affection is ſtill maintained inviolable, and increaſing. And ſecondly, to be watchful and cautious, that we do not, by our idolatry, or ingratitude, render it neceſſary for the Lord, even in mercy, to wound us in the moſt ſenſible part, and to puniſh either of us, in the perſon of the other.

You

1760.

London, 4 July.

You did not bid me write, becauſe, I ſuppoſe, you hardly thought I could refrain, for ſo many tedious days, from giving my mind a little vent. How often have I told you, that whatever pleaſure, or amuſement, I may find in the company of friends, yet there is a peculiar ſomething, that ſhares in, and gives an inexpreſſible caſt to every motion of my mind, when you are abſent? A man deprived of his right hand, may go about his buſineſs with the ſame ſpirit, and alacrity, as in time paſt, yet every thing he undertakes, will neceſſarily remind, and convince him of his loſs. This, or ſomething like it, I may have hinted a thouſand times; but as I write and ſpeak from my heart, the thought occurs as readily to me, as at the firſt, and I cannot

not eaſily avoid repeating it. I am afraid of idolatry, I am afraid we have been, and ſtill are, too guilty of the charge; and the Lord, to whom alone we belong, and to whom all our ſervices, and affections, are primarily due, might juſtly, very juſtly, blaſt our boaſted paradiſe. Yet we owe it to him that our ſouls are ſuſceptive of tender, and generous feelings. He formed us for each other, and his good Providence brought us together. It is no wonder if ſo many years, ſo many endearments, ſo many obligations, have produced an uncommon effect; and that by long habit, it is become almoſt impoſſible for me to draw a breath, in which you are not concerned. If this mutual affection leads us to the fountain from whence our bleſſings flow, and if we can regard each other, and every thing about us, with a reference to that eternity to which we are haſting, then are we happy indeed. Then not even death, (the dread of mortals, eſpecially of thoſe who live in

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the poſſeſſion of their wiſhes) can greatly harm us. Death itſelf can only part us for a little ſpace, as the pier of a bridge, divides the ſtream, for a few moments, but cannot make a real ſeparation. The friendly waters ſoon mix again, and with one force, and conſent, preſs forward to the ocean.

Were it not for the ſupport of believing that there is a brighter, and a longer day, beyond the grave, I ſhould ſink down in deſpair, and ſtarve, if I may uſe a vulgar ſaying, in the midſt of plenty. For though I have known too much, not to ſmile at the cold diſciples (if there are any ſuch) of Platonic love; yet methinks a regard like ours, is deſigned to flouriſh in a better world than this, and can never appear diſplayed to its full extent, and advantage, until tranſplanted into thoſe regions of light and joy, where all that is imperfect, and tranſient, ſhall be no more known. Here then is the true plan of happineſs for us; to conſider that God who

who made us, made us immortals; and appointed us to ſpend ſo many years, in the moſt intereſting connection, not only to ſweeten the cares of life, and to render our path through this wilderneſs more eaſy; but chiefly, that we might be helpful in animating each other, in our progreſs to that kingdom, and crown, which is incorruptible, and undefiled. A kingdom to which we are called by Him, who died once, to give us right, and now lives for ever, to give us entrance.

Liverpool, 6 Auguſt.

It is almoſt noon, and no letter. I begin to fear I ſhall not have one by this poſt; and I know not the time when a letter from you, would have been more welcome, or more neceſſary. I can but poorly bear your abſence at any time, but I ſeem to need you now, more than ever. I feel much ſuſpenſe, and anxiety, about

our

our late propoſed movements; and I have no one, to whom I can unboſom myſelf; or if I had a thouſand friends, they would ſignify little, without you. I am aſhamed, and grieved, to think how irkſome I find it, to be here alone.

Now I am well again: a great rap at the door, and a letter from ſomebody, has quite cured me. But as a few days of my leave of abſence, are yet unexpired, and the Collector (to whom I told a ſad ſtory, what a poor diſconſolate thing I am) has added ſix more to them, I think to take a journey into Yorkſhire, and to meet you, in good time, at Mancheſter. I am told, the coach performs in two days, which I am afraid will be fatiguing to you; but if I get hold of you again, you ſhall not want for good nurſing.

I am glad you ventured to London by water; for I wiſh you to ſtrive againſt, and conquer, vain fears. The only way of doing this effectually, is by placing our hopes and fears, where alone they are due.

Let us pray for grace to fear the Lord, and his goodneſs, and then we need not be afraid, though the earth be moved, and the mountains caſt into the midſt of the ſea. Many a prayer I have put up for you, ſince I ſaw you. I hope the Lord will anſwer us for ourſelves, and each other. I hope you will not be wanting to pray for yourſelf. Prayer is the great ſecret, which gives the true reliſh to life. When I can pray with ſome liberty, I find all goes on well; when I cannot, I have no real pleaſure in any thing. I believe, I ſhould not have begun my letter in ſo complaining a ſtrain, if I was not much out of frame for prayer. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you; is a maxim that we ought always to regard. To-morrow I ſet off for Yorkſhire. But how gladly would I give up the pleaſure of viſiting my friends there, to fly, by the ſhorteſt road, to you, that I might tell you by word of mouth, if I was able, how much I am

Yours, &c.

You

1762.

Liverpool, 14 *June*.

You will perhaps wonder that I chooſe the formality of writing, when we have ſo many happy opportunities of exchanging hearts, by diſcourſe. But in this way I can collect my thoughts, and preſent them to you, in one view. And you can likewiſe peruſe, and reconſider them, at your leiſure. Therefore without further apology or preamble, I proceed to the point.

Though it is not neceſſary, it always gives me pleaſure to repeat, how truly I love you, how much my happineſs depends upon you, and that I never taſte pleaſure more ſincerely myſelf, than when I am inſtrumental to the promoting of yours. And that, on the contrary, I account it among my moſt painful trials, if either through inadvertence or neceſ-

ſity, I occaſion you any uneaſineſs. I aſſume no merit from being able to ſay this. It amounts to no more, than that I know when I am well. Beſides it is a juſt debt, in which I ſtand bound for the innumerable obligations, your affection daily increaſes upon me. I ſhould be blind not to perceive, and ungrateful if I did not acknowledge, that you are not behind hand with me in your inclination; and, from the turn of our circumſtances, you have had fairer opportunities of ſhewing, what ſacrifices you can make for my repoſe, eſpecially within theſe laſt three years.

And ſtill it ſeems the advantage is, and will be, on your ſide. I am ſtill ſtriving to decline the thoughts of an undertaking, which though otherwiſe I ſhould think agreeable, has this momentous difficulty attending it, that it has not your full concurrence, and approbation. If I thought myſelf in the path of duty, and had you on my ſide, methinks all trials would be comparatively

comparatively light; but when duty ſeems to call one way, and my regard for your peace ſeems to plead powerfully for another, how can I but be greatly perplexed?

Not but that I am well aſſured, if I told you, I was at ſuch a pinch, that I could ſee no medium between grieving you, and acting againſt the light of my own mind, you would comply with any propoſal I could make; and would rather ſuffer in ſilence, than ſee me at continual variance with myſelf. But ſuch a conſent would not ſatisfy me. The more you conſtrained yourſelf for me, ſo much the more ſhould I be pained for you; and thus, by our ſenſibility, we ſhould give each other greater trouble, in proportion as we endeavoured to avoid it.

I hope therefore that I write this in a happy hour, and that the Lord, who has power over all hearts (to whom we owe our all, and eſpecially our mutual love), will accompany it with his bleſſing, that I

may not merely extort your conſent, but obtain your full concurrence and approbation to my deſign. I much deſire to enlarge my little attempts in the way of preaching, or expounding, (call it what you pleaſe), in Liverpool. The wiſh of many here, the advice of many abſent, and my own judgment (I had almoſt ſaid my conſcience), are united on one ſide; which I think would preponderate againſt Mr. B—'s ſingle ſentiment, if your fears did not add weight to his ſcale.

The late death of Mr. Jones of St. Saviour's, has preſſed this concern more cloſely upon my mind. I fear it muſt be wrong, after having ſo ſolemnly devoted myſelf to the Lord for his ſervice, to wear away my time, and bury my talents in ſilence (becauſe I have been refuſed orders in the church), after all the great things that He has done for me. And ſhould He throw me upon a ſick bed, or viſit *you* for my ſake, I believe the ſenſe of my cowardice,

cowardice, and indolence, in this buſineſs, would greatly aggravate my diſtreſs.

I think there are but two poſſible objections againſt my purpoſe. The firſt is, That I ſhould probably draw upon myſelf, ſome of that ſcorn or oppoſition, which, in a greater or leſs degree, is the uſual portion of thoſe who determine to be faithful. But even if this was a weighty ſomething, though indeed it is quite light, when compared with the bleſſings promiſed to thoſe who ſuffer for the truth; it is ſome encouragement to find, that after it has been publicly known, for more than a twelvemonth, that ſeveral of my friends frequent my houſe on a Sunday evening, I have not had the leaſt diſturbance near home, nor been treated with the leaſt diſreſpect, or ridicule abroad, upon that account. And if I procured a larger place to ſpeak in, I might ſtill go on as quietly. However I am willing to venture.

The other objection being ſtarted by

prudence, ought to be attended to. But I think that if I choſe ſuch times only, as would not interfere with my buſineſs, I ſhould run no hazard of loſing my place. And this is the opinion of my immediate ſuperiors in office, whom I have conſulted upon the point. Nay I know not but the diminutions I have found in my emoluments, may be owing to my heſitation. If I ſerve the Lord heartily, he will be anſwerable for conſequences; but if I continue to ſerve him by halves, and to rebel againſt the conviction of my mind, will it be any wonder, that when I look for much, it ſhould come to little?

You know that I am not wholly incompetent, either as to knowledge or expreſſion. Shall I flatter your regard for me, by hinting, that perhaps a ſtep of this kind, may (in a little time), gain me more reſpect and eſtimation than I have yet known? But, I hope, we both wiſh to be governed by a nobler motive. It will be of little moment what the people

of

of the world once thought of me, when they, and we, ſhall ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt!

You juſtly complain of dull Sabbaths. Let us then embrace the firſt favourable opportunity, of aiming at what may more enliven them. You love to hear me ſpeak, upon all occaſions. And I think you have ſometimes heard me with pleaſure, as a preacher. And, you know not what bleſſings may be yet reſerved for you. Perhaps the Lord may ſend you the greateſt favours, by the hand of him, from whom, you are kind enough to accept the ſmalleſt trifle with complacence.

After all, as I have already ſaid, I cannot be content with forcing your bare acquieſcence. I beg therefore you will think it over frequently, and intreat the Lord to direct us both. Perhaps, before long, it may ſeem to deſerve your approbation. To hear you ſay ſo, would make me quite another perſon. For while I remain in this ſuſpenſe, I feel, at times,

a burden which I can hardly bear, and cannot poſſibly ſhake off *.

May

* The influence of my judicious, and affectionate counſellor, moderated the zeal which dictated the preceding letter, and kept me quiet, till the Lord's time came, when I ſhould have the deſire of my heart. Had it not been for her, I ſhould perhaps have precluded myſelf from thoſe important ſcenes of ſervice, to which he was pleaſed to appoint me. But the exerciſes of my mind upon this head, I believe, have not been peculiar to myſelf. I have known ſeveral perſons, ſenſible, pious, of competent abilities, cordially attached to the eſtabliſhed church, who, being wearied out by repeated refuſals of ordination, and, perhaps, not having the advantage of ſuch an adviſer as I had, have at length ſtruck into the itinerant path, or ſettled among the Diſſenters. Some of theſe, yet living, are men of reſpectable characters, and uſeful in their miniſtry. But their influence, which would once have been ſerviceable to the true intereſts of the church of England, now rather operates againſt it. I was long in a trying ſituation, thinking myſelf bound in conſcience, upon grounds, which, I believe, would have ſtood the teſt of candid examination, could I have obtained a hearing; and yet refuſed admiſſion, by two archbiſhops and one biſhop, into that line of ſervice, which had my decided preference. This was one of the reaſons I have to praiſe God, for the partner He mercifully allotted me. She was uſeful to me through

May the Lord bleſs, guide, and guard you, and abundantly reward you for all your affection and kindneſs to

Yours, &c.

through life, but perhaps in no one inſtance more eſſentially ſo, than in the prudent uſe ſhe made, of my affection to her, and of hers to me, at this period. I believe no arguments but hers, could have reſtrained me for almoſt two years, from taking a raſh ſtep, of which I ſhould perhaps have ſoon repented, and which would have led me far wide of the honour, and comfort, I have ſince been favoured with. The Lord's time, is like the time of tide, which no human power can either accelerate, or retard. Though it tarry, wait for it.

1764.

London, 5 April.

YOUR poor husband has need of your prayers, that he may not forget himself, amidst the many careſſes he meets with. I hope I ſhall not, but my heart is deceitful, and deſperately wicked; and I can already ſee, how proſperity blinds, and hurts, even perſons of good ſenſe, and much experience. I cannot but be pleaſed, to find ſo many gracious people, in the higher ſcale of life. But I hope I could take as much pleaſure, in converſing with the poor of the flock. I think I could be happy at Olney, if the Lord made me uſeful to the people there, though neither they, nor I, ſhould be ſpoken of, beyond the bounds of the pariſh. I am glad, you are pleaſed with the proſpect; for no earthly conſideration can animate me ſo much, as to have our hearts, and deſires, united in this point,

point, as they are in every thing elſe. What a bleſſing do I poſſeſs, in our undivided, unabated affection! May the Lord ſanctify it, as a mean to lead us both, more cloſely to himſelf. We are comparatively happy now; but we ſhall not be completely ſo, till we arrive in the better world, of perfect peace and purity. My heart rejoices at the thought, of meeting you ſoon, at Liverpool; but what will that be, to the joy, when we ſhall ſtand together, before the throne of glory, free from every imperfection, and trial; when we ſhall ſee Jeſus as he is; be fully conformed to his image, and join in ſinging his praiſes for ever. With what complacence ſhall I then conſider you, as the inſtrument the Lord prepared, to preſerve me from ruin? And how will you praiſe him for our union, if he is pleaſed to make me, in any meaſure uſeful, to promote your faith and hope!

I cannot, as yet, judge, how my affairs will terminate. If it pleaſe the Lord; if it

it be the right place, and the right time, I ſhall ſucceed. But I would have you prepared, for, what we call, a diſappointment. But diſappointments, are neither more nor leſs, than providential intimations of the will of God.

London, 12 *April*.

I WAS with the biſhop of Lincoln this morning, and he has fixed on Monday next for my examination. If I get ſafe through that ſcene, I ſuppoſe my ordination will ſoon follow. He received me with great civility and candour. The beginning of my interview with the biſhop of Cheſter, was not ſo pleaſing. I ſuſpect that ſome perſon, or perſons, at Liverpool, had written to him, and not in my favour. Great men, not being able to ſee every where, with their own eyes, muſt depend upon information; and are liable to be impoſed upon by miſrepreſentation. He

ſaid,

ſaid, that before he could authenticate my teſtimonials, he muſt aſk me ſome queſtions. But when I ſhewed him Lord D——'s letter, a full ſtop was put to all enquiries, but what were agreeable. He became very ſociable; kept me in chit-chat, near an hour; and, when I took my leave, he wiſhed me mueh ſucceſs. I ſhall be glad to have this buſineſs fairly finiſhed. My mind has been greatly unſettled. Much company, and frequent changes, do not well ſuit me. Friends ſmile, and favour me, on all ſides; but creature regards, affect me too ſtrongly, and I feel a degree of dearth, in the midſt of plenty. I hope I ſhall be better, when we return to our old uniform way of life, ſo far as the expected change, will admit of uniformity. I have been more familiar with the higher ſort of life, of late, than formerly, and ſee it, in its greateſt advantage and beauty. But ſtill, my heart is *at home*; and I am fully convinced, that no aſſemblage of earthly things, could make

me

me more happy than I have been, and hope to be again, in the moderate ſituation, to which we have been accuſtomed.

I deſire to praiſe God, for the progreſs of your recovery; and begin now, to think ſeriouſly of our removal. How will you be able to travel, ſo ſoon after your long illneſs, and confinement? But why do I look ſo far beforehand? Will not he, who has done ſo much for us, do what is ſtill needful? I muſt break off. May the Lord bleſs, and comfort you.

London, 16 April.

Just in the apparent moment of ſucceſs, new difficulties occurred, which ſeemed to threaten, a total overthrow to my buſineſs. So the poor ſailor is ſometimes alarmed, with the apprehenſion of ſhipwreck, when his port is in view. But, as I truſt all difficulties are now obviated, through the kind interference of Lord D——,

D———, to whom I have occaſioned too much trouble, I ſhall ſay no more of them.

I waited on the biſhop of Lincoln this morning, and have reaſon to revere him, for his candour, and tenderneſs. The examination laſted about an hour, chiefly upon the principal heads of divinity. As I was reſolved, not be charged, hereafter, with diſſimulation, I was conſtrained to diſſent from his Lordſhip, in ſome points. But he was not offended; he declared himſelf ſatisfied, and has promiſed to ordain me, either next Sunday, in town, or the Sunday following, at Buckden. Let us praiſe the Lord!

London, 20 April.

WHAT thanks do I owe to the Lord, for all his goodneſs to me! He made me willing to reſign all, and to enter upon a very obſcure, and limited ſervice, for the ſake

ſake of his goſpel: but when it came to the point, he mercifully interpoſed, to prevent it. I aſcribe it to his goodneſs, that my application to the archbiſhop, ſix years ago, did not ſucceed. There is now a probability, of my being comfortably fixed, in a more agreeable connection. May he keep me humble, and dependant, and all will be well. But I ſee ſome ſtriking, and unexpected inſtances, of the great danger, to which the countenance, and friendſhip, of perſons of diſtinction, may expoſe a miniſter. We are poor, weak, inconſiſtent creatures, if left but a little to ourſelves. My next acknowledgments are due to Lord D———. He has greatly intereſted himſelf in my behalf. Conſidering his rank, and ſome other circumſtances, I might wonder, that he ſhould ſubmit to take ſo much trouble, did I not obſerve, from other inſtances, that he thinks not of himſelf, where there is any probability, that his influence can procure benefit to others.

As

As I have a little leiſure, I muſt fill up the paper; but how? I can repeat, that I love you; that I continually offer up prayers, and thanks, on your behalf. I can tell you again, as I have told you a thouſand times, that your dear perſon, your affection, and all its intereſting proofs and pledges, are deeply engraven on my heart. Oh! what do I, what do we both owe, to the God of our lives! Shall not the mercies, we poſſeſs in each other, though great and valuable in themſelves, be much more ſo in their effects! Shall they not lead us higher, and prove as ſteps, by which we may riſe to a ſtill greater happineſs! Yes, I truſt ſo. When I look back with wonder, to ſee how the Lord has led us thus far, by a way which we knew not, I am encouraged to hope, that the end will crown the whole. How gracious has he been to me, in preſerving me from innumerable inconveniences, into which I have been ready to plunge myſelf; and in giving me ſo many advantages and friends!

How

How gracious has he been to you, in viſiting you ſeaſonably, yet gently, from time to time; in mitigating your illneſs; preſerving, and compoſing you, during my abſence; in permitting you again to go abroad! And now, I hope, you have a change of ſituation before you, which will prove to your comfort, in every reſpect. It is true, as you obſerve, if we remove to Olney, we ſhall not be wholly without trials. They are inſeparable from this mortal ſtate, and they are neceſſary to diſcipline us, and to keep us from wandering. Let us, therefore, guard againſt reſting in the creature. Let us pray for ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and that we may welcome every event, from a ſenſe of his hand being concerned in it, and a perſuaſion (which his promiſes warrant) that ſome way or other, all ſhall conduce to our final advantage.

Buckden, 28 April.

I HAVE waited upon the biſhop, this afternoon; have gone through all the previous forms, and am to be ordained (if the Lord pleaſe) at eleven to-morrow.

I hope the repeated intimations I have given you, concerning this long-expected to-morrow, have been in time, to engage you in earneſt prayer for me. I now almoſt ſtagger at the proſpect before me. My heart is, in ſome meaſure, though I dare not ſay ſuitably, affected. I am to ſtand in a very public point of view, to take the charge of a large pariſh; to anſwer the inceſſant demands of ſtated, and occaſional ſervices; to *preach* what I *ought*, and to *be* what I *preach*. Oh! what zeal, faith, patience, watchfulneſs, and courage, will be needful for my ſupport, and guidance! My only hope is in the name, and power, of Jeſus. May that precious name be as ointment poured forth, to your ſoul

and mine! May that power be triumphantly manifeſted in our weakneſs!

I purpoſe now, to croſs the country to Olney, juſt to peep at the place, and people, and to take the Liverpool coach, at Stony-Stratford. If ſo, we may meet on Thurſday. My heart jumps at the thought. But the Lord's time will be the beſt.

Buckden, 14 June.

I CAME hither, in ſafety, about eleven this morning. I have been twice at prayers, at the chapel. The biſhop received me very kindly. Whether I have a ſecond examination to go through, or not, I cannot yet tell.

I underſtand, I cannot be diſmiſſed very ſoon on Monday; ſo that it will probably be tea-time, before I am with you. I think you will truſt me, not to make any unneceſſary delay. You know where I left my heart, and that, even if I was in a much

much more agreeable ſituation, than at preſent, I would break through all, for your ſake; and prefer the little vicarage of Olney, with you in it, to the palaces of kings, without you.

I meet here with many candidates for orders, but I know not that there is one of my own turn. However, they are all very civil; and I endeavour to accommodate myſelf to them, as far as duty, and conſcience will permit.

I pray the Lord, to fill your heart with his love. Then you will bear my abſence as eaſily, as we can brook the want of a candle, when the ſun ſhines in his noonday ſtrength. Pray for me, and for yourſelf. And remember, that, amidſt the many things which require a degree of our attention, one thing is more eſpecially needful. I commend you to his grace, and bleſſing.

YOUR

Olney, 12 July.

YOUR letter (as you will believe) was very welcome. I desire to be thankful for your safe journey. I set off, the moment the coach was out of sight, and had a pleasant walk home. As I was passing through Emberton, an old woman came after me, and invited me to her cottage. Five or six more women soon joined us. We talked, sung a hymn, and I prayed. I thought it a good baiting place by the way.

I am well, and as comfortably settled as I can desire, during your absence. I feel the want of your company, but hope to bear it without anxiety. I cannot wish to love you less; I hope it is impossible. But I wish for us both, that our regard may be sanctified, and kept in due subordination. While I rejoice, that we are so happily sensible, of what we owe to each other, I have cause to mourn, that our love

to

to him, ſhould be ſo faint, and diſproportionate. His love to us paſſes knowledge. He loved us, when we were enemies, with a love, expenſive, and intereſting, beyond expreſſion. A love, that expoſed him to ignominy, and torture, that coſt him his blood, and his life. A love, that makes over to thoſe who believe in him, all the riches of grace, and glory.

You need not propoſe Mr. T—'s caſe to me, as a caution. Our ſituations, and conſtitutions, are different. However, I ſhall try to be prudent, and careful. But our times are in the Lord's hands. He who preſerved me at Liverpool, will preſerve me at Olney, ſo long as he has ſervice for me to do. Beyond this, I have no great deſire to live, unleſs upon your account. And, I truſt, he will ſpare me, while it is needful, and good for you. If we have an eternity to ſpend together, in his praiſe, it is no great matter who is removed firſt, or how ſoon. All our tears will be then wiped away.

All our friends here, ſeem to vie in civility; and thoſe who are not friends, are kept quiet. I hope not to provoke them, by any part of my behaviour; but if they will be offended with me, for ſpeaking the truth, I cannot help it. As to proviſion, I am quite eaſy about it. The Lord, who brought me from Africa, where I was deſtitute of every thing; who has given you to me, and dealt ſo bountifully with us hitherto, will not ſuffer us to want any real good, now he has ſo viſibly diſplayed his power, and providence, in placing me here.

Olney, 14 July.

I OBSERVE what you ſay about Hampſtead. It ſeems a ſituation, in ſome reſpects deſirable, and, was I only to conſult my affection for you, I ſhould wiſh to ſee you in more agreeable circumſtances, than I can expect to procure you here.

But we have ſtriking examples, to remind us, of the danger of chooſing for ourſelves, and being dazzled by great proſpects. I am well convinced, that the Lord brought us hither, and without as clear an intimation of his will, I hope I ſhall not indulge a wiſh for a removal. The people love me; expreſs a warm deſire for my continuance; our aſſemblies are crowded, and I hope, the Lord makes my preaching uſeful. While things bear this pleaſing appearance, I ſhould not only be ungrateful to the Lord, and my friends, but blind to my own comfort, if I liſtened to a new offer.

My health continues good, and I can hardly form a wiſh, but for you. But when, which is very often, I think of the diſtance between us, I give a little ſigh, and long to ſee you. I pray many times in a day, for your peace, and eſtabliſhment in grace; and I rejoice in the hope, that God is gently drawing you to himſelf, by the alternate inducements, of light afflic-

tions, and weighty comforts, and favours. Let this be your encouragement and mine, that no one ever ſought him (in the way of his own appointment) in vain. Though he may ſeem to delay, he will ſurely come, and overpay our expectation. For myſelf, I have been brought, almoſt imperceptibly, thus far. When I think how cold, dull, and heartleſs, I have been; how often I have wandered; how often trifled upon the brink of temptation; when I conſider what powerful, vigilant, and ſubtle enemies are combined againſt me, and how many profeſſors have fallen, on my right hand, and my left, I am amazed at the greatneſs of his mercy, in preſerving me. I am a living witneſs, that there is forgiveneſs with him; and that he is able to ſave *to the uttermoſt*.

Olney, 21 *July*.

THE account you give me, of the gentleman who dined with you, is very affecting. Every loſs is gain, that is overruled, to bring the ſoul home to God. But the Lord has dealt ſtill more favourably with us. How often have *we* deſerved to be ſeparated! Yet we are ſpared to each other. May our lives praiſe him, and may we be freed from idolatry! To love each other, and dearly too, is no ſin; nay, it is our duty. But he will not ſuffer a creature, to uſurp his place in the heart. The time of our ignorance, he mercifully winked at; but now he has ſhewn us what is right, it behoves us to be upon our guard. Oh! that he may ſo diſplay the power of his grace, that the bonds, and ſhackles, which detain our ſouls might be broken! He can, he will do it, if we wait and pray.

I now can judge, by my own feelings, how much you muſt have ſuffered, during my

long ſtay in London, eſpecially, ſick, and confined as you was, and anxious for the event of my journey. I never pitied you as I ought, till now. For though I likewiſe longed every day, and every hour, to ſee you, I had many things to divert my attention, and alleviate the feelings of abſence. But at preſent, I am as you was then, at home and alone. But as I know, let who will have your company, I have your heart, I can make a good ſhift, for a time.

How are brother and ſiſter C—? Do they love like us? No, they cannot yet. For Love, at firſt, is a child, and grows ſtronger by age. I wiſh them happy; more happy than this world can make them.

Olney, 5 Auguſt.

I FEEL your headach at this diſtance. Your frequent indiſpoſitions are not pleaſant,

ſant, but I truſt they are mercies, for which we have reaſon to be thankful. Our comforts and croſſes are all from the ſame hand. We have chaſtiſement, only becauſe we need it. I aim to leave you in the Lord's hands. Should we not forget ourſelves, if he did not ſeaſonably remind us, What, and where, we are? In the caſe of ſome of your dear friends, for whom you grieve, you may ſee, how, in all probability, it would have been with you, if his eye of Love had not been fixed upon you from your birth. He prepared his diſpenſations, to withdraw you gradually from that life of vanity and diſſipation, to which you might otherwiſe have been enſlaved, all your days. And he has been gently dealing with your heart, for ſeveral years paſt; leading you, if ſlowly, yet, I hope, ſurely, nearer to himſelf. How much of his ways, how many of his people, has he ſhewn you! and he has given you a heart to love them, and reconciled you to things,

to which you were once as little inclined, as thoſe whom you now pity.

If I conſider the endearing union he has cemented between us, with all its effects, only in a temporal view, I prefer it to all the treaſures, pleaſures, and honours, this world can afford. So that I would not exchange the joy I feel, in the thought that you are mine, to be monarch of the whole earth. But ſurely, it is much more valuable, conſidered as the mean, by which the Lord deſigned to unite us both to himſelf.

1766.

Olney, 12 September.

I PRAY God to bleſs to you, the ordinances, and converſation, you are favoured with in London, that you may go into Kent, filled with the ſpirit of truth and love. When you are there, I hope you will

will make good uſe of the bible, and throne of grace, to preſerve you from being infected, by the ſpirit of the world. Ah! what a poor vain thing is the world! We have both found it ſo at times, (though we once loved it) and ſhall find it ſo again. But may the Lord keep us alive to a ſenſe of its vanity, before more evil days return, to extort the confeſſion from our feelings. Sickneſs, and pain, and a near proſpect of death, force upon the mind, a conviction of the littleneſs, and vanity, of a worldly life. But there is a more pleaſing way of learning this leſſon, if we pay due attention to the word of God, and pray for the light of his countenance. If he is pleaſed, to make his face to ſhine upon us, all that the world can offer, to bribe us, will appear inſignificant, and trivial, as the ſports of children.

He who has given us this deſire, will, I truſt, anſwer it, and unite our ſouls to himſelf for ever! Happy ſtate! To have peace with God, by Jeſus Chriſt; liberty

of acceſs at a throne of grace; an intereſt in all the promiſes; a ſure guide by the way; and a ſure inheritance at our journey's end! Theſe things were once hidden from us. We were ſo blinded by the god of this world, that we could look no farther, than the preſent life. But even then, the Lord looked upon us, with an eye of mercy. He led us on, gradually, by a way which we knew not, to bring us into the paths of peace. How wonderful has our hiſtory been; not mine only, but alſo yours. How often has he made himſelf known, as your Deliverer, and Phyſician! in raiſing you up, from the gates of the grave! May we always remember his goodneſs in your laſt affliction. How did he ſweeten the bitter cup; ſtrengthen you with ſtrength in your ſoul; enable you to pray for yourſelf; engage the hearts of many in prayer for you, and then ſpeedily anſwer our prayers. Let us then excite each other to praiſe him! I hope this little interval of abſence will be uſeful, to

make

make me more ſenſible of his goodneſs, in ſtill ſparing you to me. I make but a poor ſhift without you now, from day to day; but I am comforted by the hope, of ſeeing you again ſhortly. Had you been removed by your late fever, I ſhould not have had this relief! May we then live to him, and may every day be a preparation for the parting hour. Dark as this hour ſeems in the proſpect, if we are eſtabliſhed in the faith and hope of our Lord, we ſhall find it ſupportable; and the ſeparation will be ſhort. We ſhall ſoon meet again. Happy meeting! To part no more! To be for ever with the Lord. To join in an eternal ſong, to him who loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins, in his own blood! Then all tears ſhall be wiped from our eyes, and we ſhall weep no more for ever.

Olney, 26 September.

I WAS with you in ſpirit this evening, at the Lock, and prayed, that the Lord would give a bleſſing to what you might hear. To love, and truſt, the Lord Jeſus, is the great leſſon we have to learn. We are ſlow ſcholars, but he can teach us effectually. Without him, the very *beſt* of this life is inſipid, and his preſence can make the *worſt*, ſupportable. I often think, and hope you do not forget, how graciouſly he ſupported, and anſwered you, in your late diſtreſs. There was a ſomething, that could, and did, bear you up, under pain and anguiſh, and refreſh your ſpirit, when your bodily ſtrength was almoſt worn out. This is an inſtance of what he can do; and ſhould be a bond of gratitude upon both our ſouls. Your health is reſtored, and mine is preſerved. May we devote our whole ſelves to him. He has great things to beſtow; and if we feel our need

need of his mercy, we are properly qualified to receive it. We are not called to buy, but to beg; to receive, without money, and without price. By believing, all becomes, freely and ſurely, our own. Not on the account of our prayers, but of his promiſe, blood, and mediation. And all he requires of us, is to be humble and thankful; and the more he gives us, to deſire ſtill the more. O my deareſt M. I bleſs his name for bringing us together, and for ſparing us to have ſome knowledge, and communion, in theſe great things. How many, that were joined about the ſame time with us, or ſince, have been ſeparated by death! How many are living in mutual diſguſt! And how many, who ſeem happy, are, in reality, miſerable, becauſe they know nothing of the Lord, and of his goodneſs!

I BEGIN

Olney, 8 October.

I BEGIN to count the hours to Friday. I am very desirous, though not anxious, to see you. The Lord has been good to me, in your absence; the time has not seemed tedious, and all things at home and abroad, as well as I could wish. I begin to write to-night, because I have devoted to-morrow, to be spent, with as little interruption as possible, as a day of prayer, to intreat him to give us a happy, and sanctified meeting, and that our future lives may be devoted to him. How great are our obligations, for uniting us at first; for restoring us so often; for raising you up from so many illnesses; for preserving our affection; for overruling our concerns; for providing us friends; and especially, for directing our hearts to seek his face. And still he is loading us with his benefits. Though we have not been without our trials, yet, all things considered, who has

passed

paſſed more gently through life, thus far? And with whom, upon the face of the earth, could we be now content to change? But with nothing has my heart been more affected, than with his goodneſs, in, and ſince, your late illneſs. I am perſuaded, ſomething paſſed then, that has left a reliſh, and effect, upon your mind ever ſince. Is it not ſo? Are you not determined to be his? Next to the ſalvation of my own ſoul, I have had no deſire ſo often in my heart, ſo often in my lips, as to ſee you wholly given up to him? And I truſt, he has been anſwering my prayers, my many thouſand prayers, from year to year. What a bauble, in my eye, would the poſſeſſion of the whole earth be, in compariſon with our being fellow heirs of the hope of eternal life.

I purpoſe to be in time, to receive you at Newport. Perhaps I may wait at Mr. R——'s, as he lives oppoſite to the inn gate. But when I hear the ſound of the coach, I ſhall take my leave, with very

little

little ceremony. You never were more welcome to me in your whole life, than you will be this time.

1768.

Olney, 5 April.

I HOPE this will be the more welcome, for being unexpected. May it find you in health, and peace, panting after communion with God.

I think of you all day. And though I do not ſeem quite ſo much at a loſs, when you are from me, as I have, ſometimes, formerly been; I am ſure, it is not becauſe I love you leſs. The Lord has given us a ſufficiency of mutual affection, which has been ſtrengthened, by a long ſeries of endearments, and kind offices; and by a near participation in the comforts, and trials of life. And now, it ſhould be our great concern and prayer, that our love may not

be

be inordinate, or irregular; nor interfere with what we owe to the great lover of our ſouls. The apoſtle's queſtion, Was Paul crucified for you? ſuggeſts a thought, which diſparages all creature regard, as the ſplendour of the noon-day ſun, overpowers the twinkling of the ſtars.

May the Lord open your ears, and your heart, that you may receive profit where you are. Do not give place to unbelief. Jeſus is both an able, and a willing Saviour. Pray for a tender conſcience, and a dependant ſpirit. Watch againſt the motions of ſelf, they are ſubtle and various. Let no engagements prevent you from reſerving ſeaſons of retirement, for prayer, and reading the ſcriptures. The beſt company, the beſt public ordinances, will not compenſate for the neglect of theſe. At the ſame time, guard againſt a ſpirit of bondage; nor fetter your mind, by too many rules and reſolves. It is our privilege to ſerve the Lord with cheerfulneſs; not conſidering him as a hard maſter, but

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as a tender Father, who knows, and pities our weakneſs; who is ready to pardon our miſtakes, and to teach us to do better. He accepts us, freely and graciouſly, when we preſent ourſelves before him, in the name of Jeſus, his beloved Son.

Martham, 15 April.

We reached this place to-day about noon. I am very well, only much fatigued. The man you ſaw ſtep into the coach, was drunk all the way to Colcheſter, (where we left him.) He ſwore, for a time, almoſt at every word. As ſoon as I could find a favourable opening, I ſpoke to him. He was civil, and promiſed to ſwear no more. But, poor man! he might as well have promiſed not to breathe. However, he was tolerably quiet afterwards.

My heart loves you, my deareſt, and many an ejaculation I breathe out for you; which, indeed, is almoſt the only kind of prayer,

prayer, I have found time or room for, ſince I left London. But I hope to be recruited, and compoſed ſoon. I am likely to have buſineſs enough in hand next week. At preſent, I am dry and empty; but the fountain, from whence I have been often ſupplied, is ſtill full and flowing. Excuſe a ſhort letter. If it was not to you, I could not write at all.

Olney, 1 May.

THE Lord brought me home in ſafety laſt night. I believe our dear people are truly glad to ſee me; and I am ſure, I rejoice to be with them again. I preached this morning, from 2 Sam. vii. 24. I wiſh my deareſt, a growing experience of the ſubject. No honour can be compared to that of being the Lord's people; no privilege like that, of having him for our God.

I muſt not write much, for it is almoſt time

time to find a text, for the afternoon, which I have not yet done. I went this morning into the pulpit, as having only a ſmall piece of bread, and of fiſh, to ſet before the multitude. But, through mercy, it multiplied in the diſtribution, and, I hope, there was a comfortable meal, for thoſe who were preſent, and ſome fragments left, that will not be loſt.

It is not choice, but neceſſity, that makes me ſometimes live, as we ſay, from hand to mouth. While my head is full of new perſons, and places, I cannot do otherwiſe. And I have reaſon to be thankful, that my hopes are ſeldom diſappointed, upon ſuch occaſions: though I know not when I have been ſo ſtraitened, and embarraſſed, as I was the other night at the Lock. I rather wonder, that this happens ſo ſeldom, than that it happens at all. How juſtly might the Lord take his word of truth, out of my unworthy mouth! Perhaps he ſaw it good for me, that Mr. Self ſhould have his comb cut rather there, than

than in another place; and I hope there is that in me, which is as willing to appear to a diſadvantage, (if it muſt be ſo) at the Lock, as at Olney: though, to be ſure, fleſh and blood is pleaſed to be thought *ſomebody*, when among dear friends, or fine folks.

Olney, 3 *May*.

I DID not promiſe to write to-day, but my heart is always ready, and opportunity always welcome. I am in good health, and glad to be again retired from yonder noiſy city.

I wrote yeſterday to Mr. A——, and, in my evening walk, my thoughts, and prayers, turned much upon the affecting ſtroke he has received. Indeed, it has been ſeldom out of my mind, ſince I came home. Beſides my concern for his loſs, and my own, (there is no cauſe to mourn for *her*) I conſider it as a loud ſpeaking

leſſon

leſſon to me, and to you. How often has ſhe been raiſed up from the brink of the grave, in anſwer to prayer; and yet, now, ſuddenly and unexpectedly removed! We, likewiſe, have been long preſerved, and often reſtored to each other. But a time will come, when every gourd will wither, every ciſtern be broken. Let us pray for a waiting, reſigned, and dependant frame of ſpirit; for ability to commit ourſelves, and our all, into the merciful hands of him, who careth for us; and that, while we are ſpared, we may walk together, as help-meets, and fellow-heirs of eternal life. We ſhall not be parted a moment ſooner, for living in daily expectation of our appointed change; but the thought may be a happy mean of compoſing our minds, and of preventing us from being too much engroſſed, either by the ſweets, or the bitters, of this tranſitory life. Many occaſions of care, and perplexity, that are apt to waſte our time, and wound our peace, would be avoided, could we duly conſider how

how ſoon we ſhall have done with all theſe things. May you, may I, be more rooted and grounded in the truth, more humbled and comforted, more filled with that love, joy, and unſpeakable peace, which the goſpel reveals, and for which the promiſes of God warrant us to pray. Be not diſcouraged, becauſe you have nothing of your own. The bucket is put into the well, empty, and becauſe it is empty; the Lord has opened wells of ſalvation for us, and has promiſed, that we ſhall not ſeek his face in vain.

I long to have you at home with me; for though I am, in a ſenſe, very comfortable, the houſe looks unfurniſhed without you, and I miſs you in every room. How then muſt the *Moor-ſide* look to our dear friend! Every ſtep he takes, every perſon he meets, muſt remind him of his loſs! But I truſt the Lord is, and will be, his ſupport. May his grace be with us! Then we ſhall be equal to every thing that

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can poſſibly befal us, and need not be afraid of evil tidings.

Olney, 5 May.

YOUR laſt dear letter found me in peace, and, I hope, did me good. It quickened my prayers, and praiſes, on your behalf. I never attempt to pray, withut putting up ſome petitions for your ſpiritual welfare, nor without aiming, at leaſt, to expreſs my ſenſe of gratitude to the Lord, for joining our hands and hearts. Your affection, and its conſequences, are continually upon my mind, and I feel you in almoſt every thought. I am willing to hope, that I am, in ſome degree, freed from that idolatrous regard, which made me place you too long in a light, for which I deſerved to forfeit you every day. But I am ſure my love has ſuffered no abatement; yea, I am ſure it has increaſed, from year to year; though I endeavour

to hold you more in subordination to him, to whom I owe you, and by whose blessing alone it is, that we have found comfort in each other. I trust the Lord had a further design, than our accommodation in the present life, in bringing us together; even that we might be joint-witnesses, and partakers of his grace, and fellow-heirs of his salvation. Our earthly connection must cease; but, an eternal union in happiness, is an important prospect indeed! Every thing else, however valuable in its place, sinks into nothing, upon the comparison.

If youth, and health, and life, could be prolonged for a thousand years, and every moment of that space be filled up, with the greatest satisfaction we can conceive; this seemingly long period must at last terminate; and, when once past, it would appear short, and inconsiderable, as the eighteen years we have already spent together, do at present. But if we are united in the faith, and hope of the gospel, we shall never part. Even that separation, which must take place,

(ſo painful, at times, to think of) will not deſerve the name of parting. It will be but like the one coming down firſt from London, and the other ſafely following in a few days. And, however fleſh and blood may ſtart at the apprehenſion, the caſe of Mr. A——, and many others, ſufficiently prove the Lord's faithfulneſs to his promiſe, and that he can ſupport thoſe who truſt him, in the moſt trying circumſtances. Let it, therefore, be our chief concern, to attain a good hope, that we are his, and he is ours, and then we may cheerfully commit the reſt to him. He can forgive ſin, impart grace, ſubdue corruption, ſilence unbelief, make us ſtrong out of weakneſs, and do more than we can either aſk or think. And what he does, he does freely, without money, and without price. He does not require us to help ourſelves, before we apply to him, but to come to him for help, and we ſhall not come in vain. Fight, therefore, my deareſt, againſt unbelief, and the Lord will give you the victory.

victory. Tell him, what I am ſure you are convinced of, that you have nothing, deſerve nothing, can do nothing; but that you have heard, he is mighty to ſave, and has promiſed, that none who apply to him, ſhall be in any wiſe caſt out. None ever did miſcarry in this way. If they did, his truth, and faithfulneſs, muſt miſcarry with them.

Olney, 15 *May*.

I HOPE your viſit in Kent, will upon a review, be made profitable to yourſelf. You will admire the Lord's goodneſs, in ſelecting you, (as one of a thouſand) to the knowledge of his truth, when you might, (according to the views, with which you firſt entered upon life) have been ſtill ſwimming down the ſtream of vanity and folly, with the multitude. How little did either of us think, in thoſe early days, when I firſt knew you, to what the Lord

deſigned to lead us! Do not you ſee, and ſay, He has done great things? How often has he raiſed you from the gates of death? With what mercies, and gentleneſs, has he followed you? What a great advantage has he afforded you, in ſo large an acquaintance and intimacy, with thoſe who fear and love him. Shall the enemy urge you to draw diſcouragements, from theſe multiplied inſtances of the Lord's goodneſs? I hope not. Do not give way to unbelief. Do not indulge perplexing thoughts, of the ſecret counſels of God. What is revealed in the ſcripture, calls for our attention; and there it is written, as with a ſun-beam, They that ſeek, ſhall find. It is true, when we are ſeeking, he often exerciſes our patience; but he has told us before-hand to expect it, and has given us encouragement, by parables, examples, and promiſes, to continue praying, and not to faint. Though he tarry, wait for him. Though he may ſeem to treat you like the woman of Canaan, for a time,

yet

yet he is full of compaſſion and mercy. The humble ſpirit, the principle of faith, the heart-felt repentance, and every other gracious diſpoſition, to which the promiſes are made, are all his gifts, which he beſtows freely on the unworthy.

Since you know, that you are a ſinner, and that he is the only Saviour, what ſhould prevent your comfort? Had he bid you do ſome great thing, you would, at leaſt, have attempted it. If a pilgrimage to ſome diſtant place, was the appointed mean of ſalvation, would you be content to ſit at home and periſh? How much rather then, ſhould you keep cloſe to the throne of grace, when he has only ſaid, Aſk, and you ſhall receive.

When we firſt joined hands, neither you, nor I, knew much of the things pertaining to our peace. But as ſoon as the Lord began to ſhew me a little of the way, how much, from that time to this, you have been upon my heart, is only known to him: and I truſt he has anſwered, and

is ſtill anſwering, my prayers. What paſſed in your laſt illneſs, I ſhall never forget. I think, had he then taken you from me, I could have rejoiced in my grief. From that period, I have had a hope, of more value to me than the poſſeſſion of the earth, that he has taken a ſure hold of your heart, and that he will not ceaſe to draw you nearer and nearer to himſelf. Continue to pray, and watch over your ſpirit. Keep always in mind, that you are a ſinner, and Jeſus is a Saviour of ſinners. Such thoughts, frequently recurred to, are means, by which the Lord compoſes, and ſanctifies, the frame of our tempers, and the ſtrain of our converſation. Accept this little homily in good part; and may a bleſſing attend you in the peruſal.

1769.

Olney, 18 *May*.

I PREACHED yesterday at Collingtree. The church was full. Returned in safety before nine in the evening.

The case of those who decline from the good way, after they seem to have chosen it, is lamentable. Thus it might have been with us; but thus I trust it shall not be. The Lord has made known to us, his name of Love, and has shewn us, what we should never have seen, had it been his pleasure to kill us. Let us live under abiding views, of the all-sufficiency of Jesus the Saviour, and we may rejoice in hope. The peace of God, which passeth understanding, is seldom attained, but through a course of conflict. God gave Canaan to Israel by promise, and put them in possession, by the power of his own arm, yet they must fight for every inch of

ground. The desire, and the accomplishment, are equally of grace; yet, in the use of means, and with our eye to him, we must strive. Our poor exertions would be in vain, if he did not require them; but now they are needful, and shall be successful. The rod of Moses, the instrument of performing so many miracles, was no better than common wood, till the appointment of God gave it a wonderful virtue. Had Moses then refused, or neglected, use to it, he could have done nothing. Now the means of grace, especially prayer, may be compared to the rod of Moses. If we go on, with this rod in our hands; if we call upon God, meditate upon his promises, and plead them from day to day, he will make our way prosperous.

Olney, 28 *May*.

THE Lord has mercifully brought me home in peace. The fatigue of the journey, and the exceſſive heat on Tueſday, occaſioned a ſlight fever, which went off that evening, and returned yeſterday, as I was taking horſe at Biceſter. However I rode, not unpleaſantly, to Buckingham, and there, for fear of overdoing, we took a poſt-chaiſe to Stratford, where Mrs. U— kindly met us, and brought us home. I have ſince taken the bark, and all the uſual ſteps, obſerved in intermittents. Preached without pain on Sunday. The fever is now gone, my appetite returned, and I am well. My ſlight illneſs, was rather a baulk, and hindrance, with reſpect to my friends at Oxford, and Sutton. But taking all things together, I never had a more comfortable journey. I felt ſuch a peace and compoſure, in conſidering myſelf, and all my concerns, in the hand of

the Lord, as I cannot deſcribe, and can ſeldom attain when in health. I had not one impatient, or anxious thought, not even about you; and ſeemed quite willing, if the Lord had ſo pleaſed, to have died upon the road. I was, yeſterday, if ever in my life, as a weaned child. I hope this account of my indiſpoſition, will not hurry you home, ſooner than you intended, for I am quite recovered.

Olney, 30 May.

My thoughts will accompany you to Wimbledon to-day. Give my affectionate reſpects to our dear friends, and tell them, I ſhould have had much pleaſure in being of the party. Beſides the chief inducement of their company, I am fond of the place, and ſhould promiſe myſelf ſome pleaſant hours in the walks. But I know, neither places nor company can communicate any real good, unleſs the

Lord be present. And when he is near, any place, and even solitude itself, is agreeable. It is my mercy, to find that in Olney, which contents, and satisfies me.

I have such a levee of kind enquirers, every morning, that I am much interrupted in writing. It is pleasing to be beloved, and doubly pleasing to me to know, that the favour the Lord has given me here, is chiefly on account of the gospel which I preach. The affection, that is built upon this foundation, will endure for ever, and will flourish, when every other tie shall cease; and thus, I trust, it is between my dearest M. and me. How closely has the Lord united us, by marriage, by affection, by the strongest, and most endearing obligations! But all these, respect the present life, and must terminate with it. But I trust, there is a still nearer relation between us, in the Lord, and in his truth, which shall subsist to Eternity. In the mean time, may he give us to know more of the power, and comfort of it, while we walk together here below; that we may rejoice in

the knowledge of what he has done already, and in the proſpect of what he has provided for us, hereafter. Believe, my deareſt, and you ſhall be eſtabliſhed. Pray, and your faith ſhall be confirmed. Reſiſt the devil, with the ſword of the ſpirit, the good word of God, and he ſhall flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. I know your diſcouragements, but they are not peculiar to yourſelf. Surely, he has appeared for you in times paſt, and I cannot doubt, but he will again.

I am glad to think, the time of your return draws nigh. I miſs you every day, and hour; yet I cannot ſay, that time is burdenſome, or that I am very dull, or *unked*, as they call it here, in your abſence; as the people think I muſt be. Several of them almoſt threatened to write on Sunday, to tell you how ill I was, and to beg you to return immediately; but their fears magnified the caſe. They long to ſee you, however, for your own ſake, and give the moſt ſimple, and affecting proofs, that they love you dearly.

I HAVE

1770.

Olney, 20 *May*.

I HAVE had a morning walk, in which I was favoured with some liberty; at such seasons you are always remembered. While I would praise God that we have been so long and so comfortably spared to each other, I must not forget that an hour of separation must come, and that the time is uncertain. It must be so, and it is well. Surely we could not wish to live always here! Oh for a clearer view of our interest in the love, and all-sufficiency of the Saviour; that we may stay our souls upon him, and possess a stable, unshaken peace! It is He who has given us a desire to seek him, because He has purposed to be found of us, Jer. xxxi. 3. And though our desires are too faint, and disproportionate, to the greatness of their object, he will not despise the day

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of ſmall things, nor quench the ſmoaking flax.

I feel your abſence, and long for your return, but I am not diſconſolate. It was otherwiſe with me once. I can remember when the ſun ſeemed to ſhine in vain, and the whole creation appeared as a blank, if you were from me. Not that I love you leſs. The intercourſe of many ſucceſſive years, has endeared you, more and more, to my heart. But I hope the Lord has weakened that idolatrous diſpoſition, for which I have ſo often deſerved to loſe you. I am aſtoniſhed at his patience and forbearance, that when I preſumptuouſly gave you that place in my heart, which was only due to Him, He did not tear my idol from me! To what dangers has my ill-conducted regard often expoſed you! But he is God and not man. I hope it is now my deſire to hold nothing in competition with Him, and to entruſt my all, to his keeping and diſpoſal. If we hold each other in a proper

per ſubmiſſion, and ſubordination to Him, He will bleſs us, and make us mutually comforts and helpmates. He will ſanctify the bitter of life, and give the ſweet a double ſweetneſs. His bleſſing is the one thing needful; without it, there is neither ſecurity for what we poſſeſs, nor true ſatisfaction in the poſſeſſion. We have no good in, or of ourſelves, or which we can impart to another. We may pity, but we cannot relieve each other, when in trouble. We cannot remove one pain, or give one moment's peace of mind, to thoſe whom we beſt love.

Many prayers are, and will be put up for you and Mrs. U—, while you are away. It is this endears Olney to me. The Lord has a praying people here, and they pray for us. To be intereſted in the ſimple, affectionate, and earneſt prayers of ſuch a people, is a privilege of more value than the wealth of kings. In anſwer to their prayers, the Lord has placed a hedge about all our concerns, bleſſed our going

going out and coming in, and preſerved us and ours in health, when ſickneſs or death have been in almoſt every houſe around us. And, doubtleſs, I am much indebted to their prayers, that with ſuch a heart as mine, and ſuch a frame of ſpirit as I frequently mourn under, I am ſtill favoured with ſome liberty, acceptance, and uſefulneſs, in my miniſtry.

1771.

London, 19 November.

We came ſafely to town about noon. I have juſt parted with my dear and honoured friend, with whom the hours of the journey paſſed very pleaſantly. I am wondering at myſelf and at every body about me. It ſeems ſtrange to think of being, ſo ſuddenly, whirled away from you. So many preaching, and other engagements, are provided for me, that I believe I cannot return before Saturday. I hope the Lord will be with you, and that you will

will be led earneſtly to ſeek a bleſſing for me, and for yourſelf. I have breathed out many a prayer for you, ſince I ſaw you, and hope to do ſo, while I can breathe at all. May He give us to grow daily in the knowledge of his grace, and to rejoice in the views of his excellency, and of our intereſt in Him, as our God and Saviour. This is the one thing; and the only thing which is promiſed abſolutely, and without a poſſibility of failure, to thoſe who deſire it. Every thing elſe is vain, uncertain, and changeable. But he will ſurely, though gradually, make himſelf known to the heart that ſeeks Him.

I have been with Mrs. C——; ſhe is ſorely afflicted, but appears to be in a humble, dependant frame. From how many heart-rending diſtreſſes, by which others are ſuffering, has the good Providence of God preſerved us? May He make us thankful for the exemption, and teach us to bear our ſmaller croſſes, with a becoming ſubmiſſion to his will!

1772.

Clapham, 2 July.

If it was not to my deareſt M. I could not write ſo ſoon after dinner. But though my belly is full, and my head empty, I muſt tell you, that I had very quiet, agreeable company in the coach, and a pleaſant ride to Deptford; where I mounted a horſe my dear Mr. T—— had ſent for me, which ſaid horſe brought me ſafely hither. Thus the Lord graciouſly preſerves me, from place to place.

I am always a little awkward without you, and every room where you are not preſent, looks unfurniſhed. It is not a humble ſervant who ſays this, but a huſband—and he ſays it, not in what is called the honey-moon, but in the twenty-third year after marriage. Nor do I ſpeak it to my own praiſe, but to the praiſe of our good Lord, who, by his bleſſing, has

endeared

endeared us to each other. Inconſtancy and vanity are inherent in our fallen nature, and if left to ourſelves, we might have been indifferent, weary, and diſguſted, long ago. But He has united our hearts, and, I truſt, the union ſhall ſubſiſt to eternity. May we poſſeſs, while here, the peace which paſſeth underſtanding, and live under the abiding expectation of perfect happineſs hereafter.

Olney, 9 July.

I HAVE not much news to tell you. I have been to ſee Mrs. R——. You remember how near death ſhe was, by falling into the water, about a fortnight ago. She was ſince perſuaded to take the air, in a one horſe chaiſe. They were hardly half a mile from the houſe, when the horſe ſuddenly fell, upon a ſmooth road, and by the ſhock, ſhe was thrown out of the chaiſe, over the wheel. You

will

will not wonder that ſhe was much hurt and bruiſed, if you conſider her weight. No bones were broken, but the fall, in addition to her previous illneſs, has brought her very low, and I think ſhe cannot continue long. What thanks do we owe to the Lord, for his merciful care of us in all our journeys, when others meet with ſuch diſaſters, cloſe to their own home!

The ſtate of ſome of our family where you are, is much upon my mind. I hope I have engaged many to pray for them. The Lord grant that all you ſee, hear, and feel, where you are, may draw your heart ſtill nearer to himſelf! What is all below but vanity. There is no ſolid comfort, no abiding peace, but what we derive from above. Once we knew nothing of this. But the Lord directed our path in life, in ſubſervience to the deſigns of his grace. How few of thoſe with whom you were acquainted in your early years, have any right knowledge of God, or of themſelves. We ſet out upon this

plan,

plan, and if mercy had not ſtopped us, we ſhould have gone on, till we had periſhed with a lie in our right hands. Do, my deareſt, take encouragement from what the Lord has done, to believe that he will do ſtill more for you. Do not think that he has opened your eyes, and taught you that your help is in Him alone, only to diſappoint you. The enemy would keep you from ſeeking him diligently and conſtantly, and would perſuade you, that you get little or no good from all your attempts, but believe him not. Rather believe the word of promiſe, that though he may ſeem to delay, He will not, he cannot deny, thoſe who perſevere in aſking in the name of Jeſus. Thus much till the poſt comes in.

How little do I know of my own heart! While I thought myſelf ſure of a letter, I vainly ſuppoſed I could be eaſy, though I ſhould not receive one. But when the poſt arrived, and brought no letter from you, my ſpirits ſunk in a minute, and, I fear, I ſhall be too impatient in wiſhing for

for Friday. Surely my dear M. knows me too well, to think that after a whole week's abſence, I ſhould not be longing to hear from her. If you inadvertently neglected to write, I muſt gently blame you; it ought, indeed, to be very gently, as it is the firſt fault of the kind I can charge you with, ſince our happy marriage. I rather think you have written, but by ſome miſtake, the letter has miſſed, for I am willing to hope you are well. I am quite diſconcerted. But if I receive one by the next poſt, you need be in no pain for me, for that will ſet all to rights. I have been to bury a corpſe at Weſton this evening. I promiſed myſelf a pleaſant walk, but the want of a letter ſpoiled it. I would fain have directed my thoughts to ſubjects of more importance, but I could not. Alas! I am a poor creature. Pray, my deareſt, write often, for next to your company, I prize your letters, above any thing merely temporal, that this earth can afford.

Olney, 12 July.

I WAITED about the ſtreet yeſterday, till it was time to go to Orchard-ſide, and then deputed Molly to ſupply my place; at half paſt four the horn ſounded, and my heart went pit a-pat. But I ſoon ſaw Molly paſs the window, and by her looks and her ſpeed, I gueſſed ſhe had a letter. I ſnatched it from her, and read it, and was preſently well.

My heart was melted the other day, when I found the little book in your drawer, in which you had began to ſet down ſuch texts of ſcripture as had more particularly engaged your notice, and eſpecially when I read the two pages of prayer, with which you had prefaced them. A prayer agreeable to the promiſes of God, and, I truſt, dictated to you by his Holy Spirit. My ſoul gave a hearty Amen, to every petition. I am ſorry that any thing prevented you from proceeding in what

what was ſo well begun; but I hope you will reſume it, when you return. The bleſſings of the Goſpel are open to you. Could you ſteadily ſtrive againſt the hinderances and diſcouragements thrown in your way, and ſimply and patiently abide in the uſe of the means of grace, without giving way to vain reaſonings, you would ſoon experience a growth in peace and comfort. To patient faith, the prize is ſure. May the Lord help you thus to wait; and may he give us more freedom to converſe for our mutual encouragement. I am a ſtrange, inconſiſtent creature in this reſpect, as in many others. Next to the ſalvation of my own ſoul, there is nothing lays ſo near my heart, as your ſpiritual welfare; and yet I am often tongue-tied, and can ſpeak more readily to any body, than to you. Let us mutually endeavour to break through every reſtraint, that we may be help-mates in the beſt ſenſe of the word. I preached this morning from Deut. xxxii. 10. The

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passage applies to all the Lord's people, He found them in a waste howling wilderness. How emphatically does it apply to me? He redeemed me from the house of bondage in Africa, and has selected me, as a pattern of his grace to the chief of sinners. What a mercy to me? I trust to you also! For he appointed us for each other from the first, and his hand brought us together, and into our present situation, by a train of miracles.

1773.

London, 18 *November*.

Past three o'clock, and a cloudy morning. So says the watchman. I hope my dearest is now in a sweet sleep. When I have done writing, I shall proceed to the coach, which sets off exactly at four. Pray do not fear my being robbed, or hurt, in the dark. For I expect a guard will go with me, one to whom the darkness

and the light are both alike. I went through a very long dark lane, on Wednesday evening, with my dear Mr. Th——, but no one disturbed us, for the Lord was our preserver.

You may be sure that my heart is continually with you. I seldom pass many minutes, without darting a thought upwards, in your behalf. The knowledge of your affection, affords me the greatest pleasure, I can receive or desire, of a temporal kind. But your apprehensions on my account, when I am called from you, for a season, give me pain. I wish we could both, more simply, entrust each other, without anxiety, to the Lord's goodness. Surely, he delights in our prosperity, or else, why have we been spared so long; or how have we been so mercifully supported, so seasonably relieved, and enriched with so many blessings, from year to year? May all that we experience, be sanctified, to humble us, and to increase our dependance upon him, who is always near and willing to help us.

I must

I muſt go. I carry with me from place to place, a heart, full of an affectionate and grateful ſenſe of your love, and of the innumerable, and invaluable mercies and comforts the Lord has given me, in the relation I ſtand to you.

1774.

Olney, 27 *April*.

I SYMPATHISE with you; I already feel the concern, which you will ſhortly feel, when you ſay farewell, to your ſiſter and your family. Methinks, if I could prevent it, you ſhould not have a moment's uneaſineſs, pain, or trial, from the beginning to the end of the year. But how could you then be a partaker of that good, which the Lord beſtows upon his people, through the medium of afflictions? I hope he will give you an entire reſignation to his will; and that the grief you and your ſiſter will feel at parting, will be

compenſated by a cheerful hope of meeting again, perhaps more than once, in this life; but if not here, in a better world. And when you drop a tear at leaving your father, ſiſter, aunt, and friends, remember that you are coming to a huſband who loves you better, than it is poſſible any, or all other friends can. You will be more welcome to me on your return, than on the happy day which firſt made you mine. How will my eyes delight to ſee you, my ears to hear you ſpeak, and my arms to enfold you.

My text to night is Pſ. xxxvi. 7, 8. It is a full, and gracious promiſe. The weak, and defenceleſs, ſhall be ſheltered, under the wings of the Almighty! How does the hen cover her brood with her wings! If her *power* was equal to her *will*, nothing ſhould hurt them. The Lord our Saviour, makes uſe of this image for our encouragement; and *his* power, like his compaſſion, is infinite. Again, the hungry ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied with fatneſs;

not

not merely kept alive, but feaſted, ſo that it ſhall thrive and flouriſh. Laſtly, the miſerable ſhall not only taſte, but drink of pleaſures; not a ſingle draught, nor out of a veſſel that will ſoon be empty, but from a river whoſe ſtream is perpetual, whoſe ſource is inexhauſtible. We need not fear drinking a river dry. The ſtreams of this river make glad the city of God upon earth. How much more abundantly will it flow in heaven? Here then is our encouragement. Creatures fail and change, but the Lord is always the ſame. And He gives the water of life, freely, without money and without price. He invites all who hear, and receives all who come.

The clock is ſtriking twelve, therefore I will wiſh you a good night. May the angels of the Lord, yea, the Lord of angels himſelf, watch over your bed, and your ſleeping hours. My chamber looks rather ſolitary at preſent, yet, through mercy, I ſleep ſoundly.

Olney, 17 April.

I THANK you for your letter. I do not complain of its brevity. A ſingle line to inform me of your ſafe arrival, would have gladdened my heart, and, I truſt, have excited my gratitude to the Lord our preſerver. Not that I think you in more real danger upon the road, than when at home; for a thouſand unthought of dangers are always near us, and our own ſhort-ſighted care, is inſufficient to preſerve ourſelves, or each other, for a ſingle moment. Yet my fooliſh mind, is prone to be more ſolicitous about you, when you are out of my ſight. I am conſcious of many things, which make me wonder at the Lord's goodneſs, in ſparing you to me ſo long; and that you have not been oftener, or more heavily afflicted for my ſake. But his thoughts are high above mine, as the heavens are higher than the

earth.

earth. And it is our mercy that we are not under the law, but under grace.

I roſe from my knees, to take my pen in hand, and ſhall daily pray for you all. I truſt the Lord has given your ſiſter that knowledge of himſelf, which will make her ſituation in Scotland agreeable. The earth is the Lord's, and his ſervants, wherever their lot is caſt, have his throne of grace always near them. I know not how ſhe may fare there in point of ordinances. However, if the Lord is pleaſed to dwell in her heart, and in her houſe, He can make up every defect. His Providence undoubtedly leads her thither, and we can be no where better, than in the path of duty. His bleſſing upon ſecret prayer and the reading of his word, will keep her ſoul alive, though the public preaching ſhould not be quite to her wiſh.

Though I miſs you continually, I am neither lonely nor dull. I hope the Lord will give me a heart to wait upon Him, and then I ſhall do well enough till you are

reſtored to me; I need not wiſh the time away. It flies amazingly faſt, and alas! too poorly improved. Theſe little ſeparations ſhould engage us to ſeek his bleſſing, that we may be prepared for the hour (which muſt come) when one of us, muſt have the trial of living awhile, without the other. The Lord, who appoints and times, all things, wiſely and well, He only knows, which of us will be reſerved for this painful exerciſe. But I rely on his all-ſufficiency and faithfulneſs to make our ſtrength equal to our day. It will require a power above our own, to ſupport us under either part of the alternative, whether we are called to leave, or to reſign. But He who ſo wonderfully brought us together, and has ſo mercifully ſpared us hitherto, can ſweeten, what would otherwiſe be moſt bitter to the fleſh. If he is pleaſed to ſhine upon us, all will be well. His preſence, can ſupply the loſs of the moſt endeared creature comforts, as a candle may be eaſily ſpared when the ſun is ſeen.

YESTERDAY

Olney, 23 *April*.

YESTERDAY I went to ſee Mr. C——. I found him in much diſtreſs, and his wife in more. They took my going very kindly, but the coming of the coroner prevented my ſtay. The burial was laſt night. The church-yard was full of people; but as the hour was late, and the parents broken-hearted, I did not ſay much, at the grave. The lad was in his fourteenth year; was juſt come home from ſchool; had aſked for victuals, but before he got any, went with the cart, which was going for hay. His father was cutting the hay at a ſmall diſtance, and ſeeing the boy get up upon the ſharps, he called to him, but was either not heard, or not regarded. Another ſon drove the cart; the horſe ſuddenly took fright, and the field being full of hillocks, the cart was ſoon overturned. The boy fell under the wheel, and was inſtantly killed.

He neither ſpoke nor ſtirred. Mr. C— ſaw all that paſſed, and was then forced to be the mournful meſſenger of the news to his wife. It ſeems, ſhe was wrapped up (as we ſay) in her children. I was told that when ſhe heard of the event, ſhe flew out of the houſe, and ran a conſiderable way, ſhe knew not whither, before ſhe could be ſtopped. She had afterwards a long ſucceſſion of fits, and they feared ſhe would have loſt her ſenſes. But when I ſaw her, ſhe was more compoſed. She ſeems to be not without a ſenſe of religion, ſhe had been long a hearer in the lower meeting, but of late has come more to my church.

It is a heavy trial, but the Lord can cauſe good fruits to grow, from a bitter root. How much praiſe do *we* owe him, for that protection which has covered us as with a ſhield, in all our journeys, as well as at home? I hope ſoon to have a call to thank him, for conducting you ſafely into Kent.

I have

I have been to ſee Mrs. C— again. It is a pleaſant, retired walk to their houſe; but it was not pleaſant to me, this time. My heart, alas! was dry as a chip, unſettled as a weathercock. However I could, and did pray for you. I hope ſhe is a good woman. She told me, ſhe had often wiſhed, that ſome occaſion might bring me to their houſe. But neither ſhe nor her huſband could take courage (ſuch a formidable animal, it ſeems, am I) to aſk me. She is now troubled for having wiſhed I might come. But I hope the ſtroke may prove a bleſſing to them both.

Olney, 25 *April*.

I THANK God I continue in good health, and well enough in ſpirits. But the frame of my mind is cold, wandering, and unpleaſant. For the moſt part, when you have been abroad, I have been favoured with more compoſure, and the

hours have paſſed more agreeably and profitably, than at preſent. But you need not wiſh yourſelf at home, merely upon this account. For the Lord alone can remove the complaint of a dull, diſſipated frame. Your tenderneſs can do much for me, but you cannot relieve me in this caſe. But though I am not as I wiſh to be, I am not unhappy.

My text to night, when I lay my head upon my pillow, will be Pſ. xxxiv. 15. Who are the righteous, upon whom the eye of the Lord is fixed, and to whoſe cry his ear is open? Not the ſelf-righteous—but the helpleſs, unworthy ſinners, who, without any plea but the word of promiſe, put their truſt in the name of Jeſus. Theſe are accounted righteous, for their Saviour's ſake. They are accepted in the beloved, and, becauſe they aſk in his name, their prayer is heard. Why ſhould not we, my deareſt, open our mouths wide, and expect great things, when we have ſuch an advocate? Do

you

you ſay, How ſhall I know that He is mine? I anſwer, He is an advocate for all, who will commit their cauſe to Him. They are not deſcribed by name, but by character; as ſinners who have no hope in themſelves, are not willing to periſh, and therefore, hearing that He is able and willing to ſave *to the uttermoſt*, venture upon his word, caſt themſelves at his feet, and commit their all into his hands. Have not I, and have not you ſuch thoughts of ourſelves, and of Jeſus the Saviour? Wait then for Him, give not way to unbelief, He can do all that He ſays, and He ſays no more than He means to perform.

Olney, 30 *April*.

I FEEL for you every day while you are at Chatham, but I hope and pray the Lord will ſanctify all to your profit. If it depended upon me, you ſhould have nothing to grieve you for a moment; but

I am glad our concerns are in his wiſe and gracious hands, who appoints us a mixture of afflictions and trials, not becauſe he takes pleaſure in giving us pain (our many comforts afford ſufficient proofs of his goodneſs), but becauſe he ſees that troubles are often better for us, than the continual enjoyment of our own wiſhes.

I am concerned to find you ſo very acceſſible to fears and alarms, upon my account. Indeed I would not exchange the affection which gives riſe to them, for crowns and kingdoms. But why ſhould you make yourſelf unhappy? Why diſtruſt the good hand of God, which has ſo long preſerved us? Why ſhould you take the courſe, which in the nature of things, is moſt likely to bring upon you, the evil which you fear? Do not you, conſider, that you yourſelf expoſe me to the greateſt danger, by your ſinful diſtruſt of the Lord, and your over-much dependence upon a poor creature, who loves you, it is true, even as his own ſoul; but

who, with the warmeſt deſires for your happineſs, is, in himſelf, quite unable to promote it; unable to procure you the ſmalleſt good, or to ſhield you from the greateſt trouble. May it pleaſe God, ſo to impreſs and fill your heart, that your ſupreme and undivided regard, may be fixed upon Him, who alone is worthy. Then we ſhall be happy in each other indeed, when all our thoughts and aims, are properly ſubordinate, to what we owe to him. If we loved him with all our hearts, we ſhould find it eaſy to truſt him with all our concerns. And then it would not greatly ſignify, which of us went firſt to heaven, or by what means.

Let us, my deareſt, pray for each other. Methinks we ſtill wander in a wilderneſs, upon the very brink of a happy ſtate, and yet cannot enter. How ſtrange, that we who read of ſuch a Saviour, who are acquainted with ſuch promiſes, (made to the moſt unworthy), and are ſo fully convinced of the reality of ſpiritual bleſſings; how

ſtrange

ſtrange is it, that *we* ſhould be thus alternately elevated, or caſt down, by trifles! That we ſhould ſit, like Hagar, lamenting over an empty veſſel, when the fountain of life runs ſo near us! Keep this to read to me, when it may come to my turn, to be pinched with unbelief. Perhaps you will ſoon have occaſion to ſay, Phyſician, heal thyſelf.

I have had a pleaſant walk this evening, and was enabled to pray for you, that you may gain a bleſſing upon all your removals, and be reſtored to me in peace. My pillow text to night will be in Pſ. xxxix. Suppoſe I take ver. 8. Deliver me from all my tranſgreſſions, make me not the reproach of the fooliſh. How rich is the grace, that has provided a ground for ſo great a petition, as is expreſſed in the firſt clauſe! What arithmetic can compute the whole that is included in the word *All*. One tranſgreſſion, would be ſufficient to ſink the ſoul into ruin. But the blood of Jeſus Chriſt frees

frees thoſe who believe in Him, from the guilt of All. And his ſpirit is ſufficient, to ſet us at liberty from the power of *All* ſin, ſo that not one ſhall have dominion over us. Yet the ſupply of this ſpirit, is to be ſought by earneſt prayer; otherwiſe, notwithſtanding what we know, and what we have received, we are liable to take ſuch ſteps, as would make us the reproach of the fooliſh.

Whenever you return, you will be welcome to me, as gold to the miſer. But I hope to ſupport the interval without being burdened. My days are filled up with employment, and at night I ſleep ſoundly. So that no part of my time hangs upon my hands.

Olney, 2 May.

Methinks I ſee you juſt now. Your ſpirits ſink a little, becauſe you are taking leave of your ſiſter and friends. I allow

allow you to drop a tear or two. But I hope to-morrow, and before you have travelled many miles, you will reſume your cheerfulneſs, and leave them, and yourſelf, in the hand of the Lord, without anxiety. He fitted your ſiſter for the poſt he has aſſigned her, and, I truſt, he will not only bleſs her, but make her a bleſſing to many around her. I ſometimes think, that the child's lameneſs, may give ſuch a different turn to his future life, may prevent ſo many things that might otherwiſe have happened, and give occaſion to ſo many things which otherwiſe would not have happened, that, in the way of means, it may have a near connection with the ſalvation of his ſoul. It is good to truſt the Lord, and leave the management of all to Him. He is wiſe. He ſees to the end of our path. We, poor ſhort-ſighted creatures, cannot ſee an inch before us, and if left to our own choice, ſhould involve ourſelves in troubles, by the very ſteps we ſhould take to prevent them.

I ſhall

I ſhall be glad to hear you are at London, becauſe you will then be thirty miles nearer to me. But I remember when there were not only hills, but oceans between us. Then the Lord brought us together in ſafety. It ſeems to me now, almoſt as if we had been ſeparated for the time of an African voyage. But I wait with patience, your ſummons to meet you at Newport. I would rather ſee you than all that the world accounts magnificent. I had rather hear you ſpeak than hear all Handel's muſic. I would rather call you, Mine, than poſſeſs waggon loads of gold. Some perſons would deem this the language of folly, but it is the language of love, and of truth.

It grows late. The maids are gone to bed, and I ſhall ſoon retire to mine. It is rather lonely at preſent; but I thank God, I am a ſtranger to the remoteſt wiſh, that it were lawful for me to have any companion, but yourſelf. Since the Lord gave me the deſire of my heart, in my

deareſt

deareſt M—, the reſt of the ſex are no more to me, than the tulips in the garden. Oh what a mercy is it, that I can ſay this! I ſpeak it not to my own praiſe, but to the praiſe of the Lord. I have a vile heart, capable of every evil; and, in myſelf, am as prone to change as a weather-cock. But, with reſpect to you, he has been pleaſed to keep me fixed, as the north-pole, without one minute's variation, for twenty-four years, three months, and one day; and I humbly truſt, that he will thus keep me, to the end of my life.

1774.

Olney, 4 May.

The wind blows hard at N. E. ſo that I ſuppoſe, your brother and ſiſter are embarked. If they are, I do not mean to be very uneaſy for them, and I hope you will not. The God of the dry land, is God

God of the ſea likewiſe. He is as near us in a ſtorm, as in a calm; and we need his protection, no leſs in a calm, than in a ſtorm. May the Lord give to them, and to us, his grace; that, looking to him, we may be comforted under all ſeparations and changes, by an aſſured hope of meeting, to unſpeakable advantage, in a better world! We are all leſſening the diſtance, apace, to our everlaſting home. Our voyage through life, will ſometimes be incommoded by ſtorms; but the Lord Jeſus is an infallible, almighty pilot. The winds, and the ſeas, obey him. None ever miſcarried under his care; and he takes charge of all who entruſt themſelves to him. Has he not made us willing to do ſo? Then we may be ſure, he will not diſappoint the hope, which he himſelf has given us. Let us make his good word our compaſs, to direct our hearts, to the haven, to the heaven, where we would be!

I need not wiſh time away; it flies with an amazing ſwiftneſs, even in your abſence.

But

But I hope it will be better with me, when you return. I am not uncomfortable, but I am a little unſettled. I can do more buſineſs, in two days, when you are at home, than in three, when you are abroad. For though I ſit many an hour in my ſtudy, without ſeeing you, yet to know, that you are in, or about the houſe, and that I can ſee you when I pleaſe, gives a ſort of compoſure to my mind: ſo that I muſt not ſay, your company is a hinderance to me upon the whole. Though occaſionally, my attention to you, may make me leave ſomething undone, which I ought to have done. In ſhort, whether with you, or without you, I am a poor creature, and ſee much to be aſhamed of every day, and in every circumſtance.

My comfort, and my care,
My ſafety, and my ſnare,
You have been, and you are!

However, I have great reaſon to bleſs God, that I ever ſaw you.

I AM

Olney, 9 May.

I AM very glad you heard, and approved, Mr. ——, and eſpecially, that you mean to call upon him. I hope, you will pray, and ſtrive againſt, thoſe prejudices, which your affection for me, and your jealouſy, leſt any perſon ſhould not look upon me with the ſame partiality, which you do, have ſometimes occaſioned. Theſe thoughts have been the greateſt hurt to your ſpirit, and the greateſt hinderance to your comfortable progreſs, of any thing that I know; and have ſometimes given me no ſmall uneaſineſs. I cannot wiſh you to love me leſs, but I often wiſh you could be leſs anxious about me. Pray for me, that I may be ſimple, upright, and diligent, in my walk and work; and then you may cheerfully leave my concerns with the Lord; and may be aſſured that he will give me, as much acceptance and favour, as is good for me. Be upon your guard againſt making your-

ſelf,

ſelf, and, of courſe, me, uneaſy about things, which neither of us can help, or alter. Temptations follow tempers; and Satan is always ſubtle, and buſy, in his attempts to break our peace, and divert our thoughts from the main object. Though your company is my deareſt, and moſt valued, earthly comfort, I ſhall be well repaid, for a month's abſence, if you bring home a deſire, to watch and pray againſt thoſe wrong impreſſions, which your love to me, has ſometimes obtruded upon your mind. And I hope to ſtudy myſelf, the leſſon I recommend to you; and to ſtrive, and pray, for the ornament of a meek, and quiet ſpirit. But alas! though I know in theory, what a chriſtian ſhould be, I am ſtill ſadly deficient in practice.

Give my love, and thanks, to all my kind friends. I was once without a friend; but God has ſince given me many. Who that had ſeen me at the Plantanes, would have expected, what has ſince taken place? How unworthy am I, of all that I have received!

received! Very unworthy of being made happy in you; but above all, unworthy of the honour of preaching the gospel, which I too long despised, and blasphemed!

My evening walk was outwardly pleasant, but my mind was confused. However, I prayed for you. Let me be as I will, in other respects, you are always present to my thoughts. My love has been growing from the day of marriage, and still it is in a growing state. It was once as an acorn, but it has now a deep root, and spreading branches, like an old oak. It would not have proved so, if the Lord had not watered it with his blessing.

Olney, 21 *December*.

As you intimate you shall not come before Saturday, I write again. I need not wish the interval away, though I long to see you: Saturday will soon be here. I thank the Lord, and I thank you, for your

letter. Indeed, he has been very gracious in ſupporting you, and your father, ſo much beyond expectation; ſurely my heart has had a fellow feeling with you. But ſuch ſorrow, as he by his grace is pleaſed to ſanctify, will be hereafter numbered amongſt our mercies. I often ſpeak much, in public, of his all-ſufficiency to uphold, under every trial. I have ſeldom had a more remarkable proof of it, than in the courſe of this late affliction. May he enable you to improve this inſtance of his goodneſs, as an argument againſt that vain reaſoning, of unbelief, which has ſo often diſcouraged you. If he had not been with you, I am ſure you would have been cruſhed like a moth. I hope, when we meet, we ſhall rejoice in his loving-kindneſs; and that you will be able to ſay, Becauſe he has heard me, therefore I will call upon him, as long as I live.

May we learn, from what we have felt, and from what we daily ſee, of the vanity of all things here, to fix our thoughts upon the

the one thing needful. That we may experience his loving-kindneſs to be better than life itſelf, and may have a ſure reſource in his love, againſt the preſſure of every remaining trial, that may be allotted us. That we may rejoice, as thoſe who are ſtill liable to be called to mourn; and mourn, as thoſe who have a happy proſpect, of rejoicing for ever, at laſt. I thought, on Monday morning, that I was praying for you, while you were ſtepping into the coach. But when you *did* ſet off yeſterday, I was aſleep. But the Shepherd of Iſrael, who neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps, was pleaſed to watch over you, in your journey; for which I deſire to praiſe him. Sickneſs, and death, have entered many houſes here, ſince you left home. But we are ſtill preſerved. Our times are in the hands of him, who careth for us.

I have had another peaceful night, and awoke this morning in health. I hope you can ſay the ſame. We lie down, and ariſe in ſafety, becauſe the Lord ſuſtains

us. Oh! to ſay, This God, this great God, is our God; our ſun, and ſhield, and portion! What a privilege is this? What a counter-balance for every trial! And ſince he has ſaid to our hearts, Seek ye my face, and has given us a deſire to anſwer, Thy face, O Lord, will we ſeek, it is not poſſible, that we ſhould ſeek in vain. The Lord bleſs, and keep you, lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace, Amen.

1775.

London, 26 Auguſt.

I MUST ſend you a ſhort letter for once. May the Lord bleſs you, give you compoſure of mind, and do you good every day. I know you will be ready enough to come to me, when you can, and therefore I leave the *when* to you. I like Monday beſt, becauſe it is neareſt; but

but if you ſtay till Tueſday, I will wait patiently. But you know, I am not quite the thing, when you are abſent. Methinks I would have you always at my elbow. Give my love to my dear child, who, I hope, and believe, will be a good girl. And I beg of her, and of all who are about her, that your rules, to which ſhe ſo cheerfully ſubmits, when at home, may be broken as little as poſſible. Tell all her friends, that I love her, and accept her, as my own child, and ſhall account the care of her, to be one of the moſt important concerns of my life.

Olney, 18 *November*.

I BEGAN to liſten at four, for the ſound of the horn. I liſtened till five, before I heard it. Soon after, I received your dear letter. My heart travelled with you, from ſtage to ſtage, and I ſet you down in the Old Jewry, juſt at the time

you mention. But Oh! what cauſe have I to be thankful, that you were ſhielded, by the Lord's protection, from the many poſſible events, which might have ſpoiled my calculations, and ſent me to bed to-night, with an aching heart. I hope you are now at Chatham. I have put you into the Lord's hand, who I truſt will do you good. Yet I cannot help being anxious, till I know how you felt, and what you met with, upon your arrival. If your dear father be ſtill living, give my love, and duty, to him, and aſſure him, that he is always in my thoughts, and prayers. May the Lord ſupport you, and keep up your ſpirits, by a ſenſe of his power, and goodneſs!

Olney, 21 November.

I TOLD the people, on Sunday evening, my good news, and read your father's letter. Both he and you were earneſtly

prayed

prayed for. But I ſuppoſe, more than a hundred were detained from us, by colds and illneſs. There is ſcarcely a houſe, without ſome perſons ill in it; and the general word is, That they never had ſuch a ſort of cold before. Many have taken to their beds. But in a few days, moſt of them begin to amend.

W. and R. B— ſent me word, that their little girl was dying, and I have ſince heard, ſhe is dead. I expect to find them in much trouble. Thus, at one time or another, every family, and every perſon, finds vanity entwined with their choiceſt comforts. It is beſt for us, that it is ſo. For, poor and vain as this life is, we are ſufficiently attached to it. How ſtrong then would our attachment be, if we met with no rubs, or thorns, by the way? Is not the hiſtory of every day, a comment upon thoſe words, This is not your reſt? I think, you and I muſt acknowledge, that the Lord has given us, from the beginning of our union, a favoured lot: I think we

have experienced, as much of the good, and as few of the evils, of life, as any persons whom we know. And yet, if we could fairly estimate all the pains, anxieties, and croſſes, we have met with, from firſt to laſt; it would make a conſiderable abatement, in what, when taken in a more general view, may well be deemed a happy ſtate. And how ſoon has the beſt of it paſſed away! Nothing now remains of many endeared hours, but the remembrance. Though we have had the beſt, that ſuch a life can afford, it would be a poor happineſs indeed, were this our All. But bleſſed be God, who has given us a better hope, than we had when we ſet out. For, I think, we then propoſed no higher ſatisfaction, than we could find in each other. It was well for us both, that I was conſtrained to leave you, for three long voyages: for though thoſe frequent ſeparations were very irkſome, at the time, they were ſanctified to make us look farther. Oh! he has led us wiſely and graciouſly!

ciouſly! He has done all things well. We have nothing now to aſk, but for a deeper, and more thankful ſenſe of his goodneſs.

Olney, 26 November.

I AM thinking of you, and lifting up my heart for you, almoſt continually. You are in the Lord's ſchool. He ſent you, to give you the moſt ſatisfactory proofs, of his goodneſs to your father; which, I hope, will prove an encouragement, and a cauſe of great thankfulneſs to yourſelf. He is very gracious, and, I truſt, will ſhew himſelf ſo, to you, and in you. But you deprive yourſelf of comfort, by liſtening to the voice of unbelief, which weakens your hands, and prevents your progreſs. How often are you diſtreſſed, as though you were only to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord to others, and not to taſte of it yourſelf! Yet the path

of few people, through life, has been more marked with peculiar mercies, than yours. How differently has he led us, from the way we ſhould have choſen for ourſelves! We have had remarkable turns in our affairs; but every change has been for the better; and in every trouble (for we have had our troubles) he has given us effectual help. Shall we not then believe, that he will perfect that which concerns us? When I was an infant, and knew not what I wanted, he ſent you into the world, to be, firſt, the principal hinge, upon which my part, and character, in life, was to turn, and then to be my companion. We have travelled together near twenty-ſix years; and though we are changeable creatures, and have ſeen almoſt every thing change around us, he has preſerved our affections, by his bleſſing, or we might have been weary of each other. How far we have yet to go, we know not; but the greater, and (as to externals) the pleaſanter, part of our journey, is, probably,

probably, paſſed over. If our lives are prolonged, the ſhadows of the evening, old age, with its attendant infirmities, will be preſſing upon us ſoon. Yet I hope this uncertain, remaining part of our pilgrimage, will, upon the whole, be the beſt: for our God is all-ſufficient, and can make us more happy, by the light of his countenance, when our temporal comforts fail, than we ever were, when we poſſeſſed them to the greateſt advantage.

Olney, 3 *December*.

When you told me, that S— was coming home, my heart ſunk like a ſtone; but it ſoon revived, upon finding you had altered your purpoſe. If ſhe had come, I muſt either have ſent her back again, or have ſet out myſelf to fetch *you*. If you were not where you are, ſhe would be very uſeful to me here: I feel the want of her. But as things ſtand, you muſt either both

come, or both ſtay: for I ſhould not have one comfortable day, if you were at Chatham, alone. Every inconvenience will ſeem light, if compared with the thoughts of your being left by yourſelf. Your dear father is not acquainted, either with my feelings, or my ſituation; but you will do your beſt, to appriſe him of both. As to your return, if there be good grounds to think, that the time of his departure is near at hand, I ought not to deſire it: but if the unexpected turn, the phyſician ſpeaks of, ſhould prolong his life, for months, or years; and reſtore him to the ſame ſtate, in which you left him, in September, your preſence at home, will ſoon be ſo neceſſary, that nothing, but the moſt urgent call of duty, can diſpenſe with it. I ſpeak, not merely upon my own perſonal account; you are greatly wanted by the ſick, by the poor, and by your family. There are many things, to which I cannot attend, as I ought, while you are away. I hope, if your father recovers, ſo

far

far as to bear a removal, he will give up buſineſs, and come and live with us; and ſpend the remnant of his days amongſt thoſe, who can join with him, in talking of that better land, to which he is going, and in praiſing the Lord for his goodneſs.

I hope, nothing that I have written, will make you uneaſy. My mind has been a little agitated; but now I have put down my thoughts upon paper, I am compoſed again. Your abſence is, indeed, a trial; but who am I, that I ſhould not have trials? Ah, I have deſerved much more than this, even to be broken, with breach upon breach, and to be deprived of you altogether. The Lord helps me, in ſome meaſure, to reſign all to his diſpoſal, and to ſay, Not my will, but thine be done. This ſeparation is not like ſome, which we have formerly known: there are no oceans between us now, nor am I under a painful ſuſpenſe, as when I could not hear of you, for a whole twelvemonth. Even then, he was pleaſed to watch over us; to ſupport

us;

us; and reſtore us to each other, again and again. Therefore, my ſoul, hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him. Yea, I will praiſe him now, for his goodneſs to you. I know you have felt much: afflictions muſt be felt, to be ſanctified. But you have been ſtrengthened, according to your day. We ſeem, as I lately obſerved, to have had as ſmooth a journey, thus far, as moſt people. Yet, at intervals, our trials have been very ſharp. Mine are always ſo, when I feel for you; though few things, with which your peace, or comfort, are not connected, give me much trouble. I pay, at ſome ſeaſons, a heavy tax, for loving you, I had almoſt ſaid, too well. But I cannot love you too well, unleſs I love you improperly. I believe it was of the Lord's goodneſs, that I loved you at firſt; and I am ſure, that both duty and gratitude, bind me to love you now. The love, which a huſband ſhould bear to his wife, is expreſſed in very ſtrong terms by the apoſtle, Epheſ.

v. 25—28. But you certainly *have been* my idol, and I often fear, you are too much ſo ſtill. Alas! how difficult is it to draw the line exactly, between undervaluing, and overvaluing, the gifts of God! The good Lord pity, and pardon, us both, and take ſuch a full poſſeſſion of our hearts, that no rival may interfere, with what is only due to him!

Olney, 7 December.

If your letters (as you think) afforded me, neither pleaſure nor comfort, I ſhould not ſo earneſtly wiſh you to write; but you may be aſſured, they afford me both, and that in your abſence, nothing of a temporal kind, can give me equal ſatisfaction. I uſually grow thoughtful, and abſent, about four o'clock, when I expect the poſt is coming, till I hear the horn; then my ſpirits flutter. But when I receive a letter from you; have read it, and find

find you were well, I preſently feel compoſed, and, I hope, a little thankful. Thus it was to-night. Glad I am to hear, that your dear father is preparing to part with his houſe, and ſeems not unwilling to come to Olney; where, I truſt, he will find me heartily joining with you, to do every thing in our power, to make his remaining days comfortable.

The language of Pſ. xl. 5. ſuits me well. There is no end to the inventory of my mercies. May he, who has given ſo much to us, and done ſo much for us, add the crowning mercy of a thankful heart! Though I can talk of thankfulneſs, I feel much inſenſibility; but I know, that while ſin dwelleth in me, it will have effects. It will diſtreſs, but it cannot condemn, thoſe who believe in Jeſus. In Iſaiah xliii. 24, 25, we have a character of the Lord's ſalvation: it is *free*, for his own ſake. It is *full*; the blotting out of ſin, like a cloud, beyond recal and remembrance. And the ſubjects of

this

this salvation, are they who have wearied him by their iniquities.

Olney, 23 December.

MANY prayers are offered for you; and I hope we shall soon have to offer praise. I pray, not only that we may be restored to each other, but that our long separation may be sanctified to us both. Though it has been a gentle trial, compared to what the Lord might justly have sent, and mingled with great mercies, yet a trial it is to me, and, perhaps, more so to you. Not that I mean to yield the palm to you, as if you can be more sensibly affected by absence, than myself; but I allow my situation at home, is more pleasant than yours, while abroad. Considered as a trial, we have cause to be thankful, that it has been so much sweetened; and we should likewise aim, to draw some useful lessons from it. I hope

I have

I have learned ſome, if I can but practiſe them. I cannot feel how much I miſs you, when you are from me but a few weeks, without thinking what ſupport I ſhould need, if I was wholly deprived of you. The like thought, I ſuppoſe, is ſometimes upon your mind. The hour will probably come, when we muſt experience the alternative of leaving, or being left. For though poſſible, it is not very likely, that we ſhall be removed both at once. May the Lord impreſs the event of this unknown hour upon our minds; not to diſtreſs us, but to keep alive in us, a ſenſe of the inſignificancy of every thing here, compared with the one thing needful! May he cauſe our faith to grow and take deep root, and fix in us ſuch a perſuaſion of his all-ſufficiency and grace, and of our intereſt in his promiſes; that we may truſt and not be afraid, but cheerfully commit all that is before us, to his care. He who has ſupported us for weeks, can ſupport us for years, and make thoſe

things

things tolerable, which ſeem the moſt formidable in proſpect. We are prone to be over earneſt about matters, which will one day appear to us of no more importance, than the recollection of a dream. But, oh! the peace of God ſatisfies and fills the heart, and leaves but little room for anxious cares, or a warmth of ſpirit about trifles!

I acknowledge your kindneſs in ſending me tolerably long letters, and by way of thanks, I have this time taken a large ſheet of paper, and will try to fill it. If I had leiſure, and could find ſomething to ſay, I would pleaſe myſelf with writing, not ſheets, but quires. But I have many things to attend, and meet with hourly interruptions. When I awakened our dear little girl this morning, I aſked her for a text, and ſhe very promptly gave me Iſa. xlii. 16. which contains an epitome of my own hiſtory, and of yours alſo. How blind were we, when the Lord brought us together! How little did we

then

then think of the paths, *by* which, and *to* which, He had purpoſed to lead us. But He cauſed light to ſhine upon our darkneſs, He has made a thouſand crooked things ſtraight before us, and we have good reaſon to truſt his promiſe that He will not forſake us. Crooked things will occur in our path, now and then, but, if He be with us, we need not fear. And the time is ſhort. May we learn to ſpeak the Pſalmiſt's language from our hearts, Lord! what wait we for, our hope is in thee. We have ſeen much of the good, which this life, in a temporal view, can afford. We have felt enough of its evils, to know that all here is mingled with vanity, and vexation of ſpirit. And I truſt, that before He removes us, He will make us heartily willing to go, that we may behold Him who ſhed his precious blood, to redeem our ſouls.

Olney, 16 December.

THE Lord is very good to me. He maintains my peace, and preſerves me from evils and ſnares. But I feel much abomination in my heart. I can truly ſay, It is a cage of unclean and hateful birds. I dare not entruſt any one, not even you, with a detail of the wild, fooliſh, and dreadful thoughts, which often peſter my mind. The Lord, who is infinitely holy, ſees All, yet He bears with me, and permits me, vile as I am, to call him mine. Is not this wonderful? Oh! He is full of grace and mercy! I hope you think and find him ſo.

Yeſterday was a buſy time, but I was led comfortably through. I had a good night, and ſlept this morning till paſt ſeven. I am ſufficiently indulgent to Mr. Self. Do not fear my pinching, or overworking him. I need a ſpur more than a bridle. You often think I do too much;

I much oftener ſee cauſe to confeſs myſelf, comparatively at leaſt, a ſlothful and unprofitable ſervant. In the concerns of immortal ſouls, with eternity in view, and ſo much depending upon the preſent moment, what aſſiduity, or importunity, can be proportioned to the caſe? I ought to be always upon the wing, ſeizing any opportunity of aiming to be uſeful, whether by word or pen; and of courſe, much more careful and diligent than I am, to redeem the time. The Lord pity and pardon us all, and make us as wiſe in our generation, as the men of the world are in theirs!

Olney, 27 December.

We are all well, and therefore you need not be alarmed at my writing ſo ſoon. Mr. R— called on me this morning, and when I ſpoke of my intended journey, he ſaid, he muſt go to London ſoon,

ſoon, and that if he could be of any ſervice, he would ſuit his time to ours, and willingly conduct your father to Olney. When he firſt ſpoke, my heart anſwered, Thank you for nothing; I do not chooſe to miſs the pleaſure of ſeeing my dear M. at leaſt a whole week ſooner than if I wait for her at home. But I ſoon conſidered, Mr. R. is an active ſtrong man, who has his eyes and his wits about him, and could, perhaps, upon many occaſions, be much more helpful to my father, than I could. So I muſt mention this to her, and if ſhe approves it, I muſt, for my father's ſake, ſubmit to ſtay a little longer, before I ſee her. If you think that my coming will do as well or better, here I am in waiting. Nothing but prudence, and a ſenſe of duty here, would prevent my ſetting off towards you this night. I ſhould much prefer it to going to bed. If it depended on my will only, I feel myſelf well-diſpoſed to take a journey of five hundred miles, for one day,

or

or half a day of your company, if I could have it upon no eaſier terms. I need not multiply words, *you* well know that I cannot wiſh for an excuſe, to prevent my coming to you. But your father's ſafe and comfortable travelling, is at preſent a chief object with me. I love him for his own ſake; when he gave his conſent that you ſhould be mine, he laid me under an obligation, which I can never repay; and over and above all this, he is *your* father.

1776.

Olney, 7 January.

For fear the ſnow ſhould prevent my being with you on Tueſday, I write a haſty line to tell you that we are all well.

I ſuppoſe, if Self had his will, he would think his journey to you, of ſuch importance, that no ſnow ſhould have fallen to retard it, or make it inconvenient. Poor proud

proud creature! What a presumptuous worm, to admit one thought against the appointment of the most High; instead of being duly thankful, that you and I, are safely sheltered, and well provided for, in this severe weather! What hardships are some persons suffering this morning, while you, I hope, are sleeping peacefully in your bed, and I am sitting by a good fire. Far be it from us to repine, if in some things our inclinations are a little crossed. It is often, yea always, in mercy when they are. We have seen it so in many instances already, and shall hereafter see that it was so in all.

Let me beg you not to give way to fears on my account, nor to calculate the depth of the snow, at present, nor of the floods, when the snow shall melt. Since *you* have had an interest in me, the Lord has preserved me, in the midst of many dangers, such as you can form no idea of. We may safely trust him now. His arm is not weary; He is always near us, and

his Providence watchful over thoſe that fear him. But I know I cannot reaſon away your apprehenſions, any more than I can my own, when they are exerciſed about *you*. I will therefore direct my thoughts upward—Lord do thou keep her heart ſtaid upon thee, and give her power to truſt all in thine hand, and ſubmit all to thy will! Amen.

Olney, 9 January.

If I did not feel for your anxiety, I ſhould be quite eaſy, for we are all well, and ſurrounded with mercies. I thought to be in London to-night, and with you to-morrow; but the Lord appointed otherwiſe. The greateſt fall of ſnow, I ever remember, has prevented me; but I might have been prevented by illneſs. Till ten or eleven this morning, I thought of making myſelf as eaſy as I could, at home. But after the waggon came in, finding that

the

the road was open to Newport, and it beginning to thaw, I ſuppoſed if I could reach thither, I ſhould find the high road paſſable enough. As I chalked it out, I was to reach St. Alban's by eight, ſet out from thence at four to-morrow morning, breakfaſt in London, and drink tea in the afternoon with my deareſt M. Accordingly, about noon we began our march. Mr. R. led the van, I was in the centre, and Richard brought up the rear. He was deſigned to bring the horſes home. I was a little concerned how he would be able to manage the three horſes, but my concern was needleſs, for we returned as we went. The road from Newport was impaſſable to carriages. Neither chaiſe nor mail could move. I came ſafely home, well pleaſed that I had made the attempt, and only anxious leſt you ſhould be alarmed. I wiſh you may be able to drive away your fears upon my account, or rather pray them away. I am in ſafe hands. The Lord is my protector and yours too.

But if your painful feelings cannot be avoided, may they be ſanctified! My love is unwilling that you ſhould have an uneaſy moment, but the Lord's love is not only tender, but wiſe.

Nor let us regret, that this fall of ſnow ſhould prolong our ſeparation. It fell by the direction of God's providence, both as to the time, and the ſpot. And he likewiſe times *our* concerns; or the ſnow might have detained your father on the road, as I hear it has ſome company, who were glad to be ſheltered in a ſmall public houſe by the road ſide, and can neither get backward, nor forward. Come, all is well. We are, indeed, aſunder; but I am not in Africa. How things are now we know. What unforeſeen events the interpoſition of the ſnow may have prevented, we know not. As it is, the conſciouſneſs, of loving, and being beloved, remains with us; and this is better than every thing elſe would be, without it.

You

Olney, 20 January.

You ſay, you cannot deſcribe your uneaſineſs, when you neither ſaw me, as you expected, nor heard from me. I need no deſcription. I felt it for you. I well knew how you would be ſituated, unleſs you were apprized that the roads were ſtopped. Had the ſnow fallen with you as with us, you would have accounted for my not coming. I think no motive, leſs powerful than yourſelf, would have induced me to go to Newport when I did. It was at leaſt an unpleaſant ride, and I could not have managed it, had I been alone. We were obliged, in ſome places, to quit the road, which was impaſſable, and to go round the open fields, and, at times, both the horſe and his rider were almoſt buried in the ſnow. If either fatigue or expence could have prevented your anxiety, you would have had none. But I hope all is well over now.

It may help to make us patient, it ſhould, indeed, make us thankful, to reflect upon the vaſt diſtreſs that multitudes are probably in, both by ſea and land, at this moment while I am writing. Some ſtarving with cold, others with hunger, ſome loſt in the ſnow, others daſhing againſt the rocks. Ah, my deareſt, how has ſin filled the world with woe! And we are ſinners like others; but our ſufferings are light, compared with what many endure, and ſtill more light, if compared with our deſerts. The Lord has done a great thing for us, in ſhewing us the way of ſalvation. Here may our thoughts and deſires chiefly fix. If ſin be pardoned, if we are accepted in the beloved, then He will guide us by the way, and heaven will be our portion at the end. And ſee! He is ſeated on a throne of grace, and ready to beſtow every bleſſing that we need, more than our ſcanty minds can either aſk or conceive. I am at a diſtance from you. But alas! what am I? If

you

you were here, I could afford you no comfort, or help, but by his bleſſing. But He can do you good without me. He can ſenſibly refreſh you, or ſecretly ſupport you, and be unto you, as rivers of water in a dry place.

Olney, 29 January.

I AM not ſurpriſed that you, ſometimes, find it hard to be reconciled to your preſent ſituation. I was much comforted by the ſtrain of cheerful ſubmiſſion, expreſſed in your two former letters; but I know, from what paſſes in my own heart, that we cannot maintain ſuch a reſigned frame of ſpirit, by any power of our own. I wiſh you, however, to look back a month or two, to the time when you feared ſomething had happened to me. You then thought, if you could be ſure that I was well, you could make light of every inconvenience. The preſent ſevere

weather is a diſpenſation from the Lord. Thouſands feel much more terrible effects from it, than we have felt; and I know no ground of claim that we have, to an exemption from a ſhare in thoſe trials, to which all are expoſed. May the Lord help us to ſubmit and wait patiently, for after all, we can alter nothing. We may make things worſe by a want of reſignation, but we cannot mend them.

I acknowledge that your part of the trial has been the hardeſt; yet mine has not been light, eſpecially, if what I have felt for *you*, be taken into the account. Yet, upon the whole, the Lord keeps my mind attentive to what I have deſerved, and to what others ſuffer, ſo that, in the main, I am quiet and peaceful. If either you, or I, or the dear child had been ill, the trial would have been much greater, yet even then we could not have helped ourſelves.

Olney, 30 January.

WRITING to you, is now almoſt the only thing to which I can attend. Let us try to be thankful that we are all well, and favoured with the neceſſaries and comforts of life. And let us pray that this ſeparation, with all its inconveniencies, may be ſanctified. How often have I committed you and myſelf to the Lord, ſeemed willing that he ſhould take his own methods with us, and that, in hope he would make all things work together for our good, I would never preſume to ſay to him, What doeſt thou? And yet, when I think of your preſent diſtreſs, my ſpirits are ſo ſoftened and affected, that I am ready to overlook my innumerable cauſes for thankfulneſs. I can eaſily ſee, how this trial may be one of the all things, working together for our good; but it is his bleſſing muſt make it

ſo. For if left to myſelf, I am capable of forgetting both corrections, and comforts.

I am writing by a good fire, and while I almoſt burn on one ſide, I feel the froſt on the other. How true is that word, Who can ſtand before his cold? And there is another good word which I hope, in due time, to ſee fulfilled, He ſendeth forth his word and melteth them, He cauſeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow. He can make a ſpeedy and powerful change in the weather. When he giveth his commandment, it runneth very ſwiftly. Such likewiſe is his power over the heart. He can give peace for trouble, heal our ſorrows, revive our graces, and make us joyful in tribulation. If He ſpeaks, it is done. He can bring real and enduring good, out of ſeeming and tranſient evil, water out of rocks, and honey out of lions. Oh! that I could leave you, myſelf, and my all in his hands; be ſtill and know that He is God, and ſtand ſtill to ſee his ſalvation. Remember me

to

to Mr. K—. If he wants his house cleared, I want mine to be filled. But the Lord has interposed. We must not complain; if we do, we directly find fault with Him, who appointeth the seasons.

Olney, 1 February.

Your mournful letter made me thoroughly uneasy, till this evening about eight, when I was surprised by a note informing me that your father was at Newport, where they could not get a chaise, but wished to come to Olney to-night, if I could send one. You may guess how I ran and flew, to get one. It set off soon; it is now ten o'clock, and I expect them in half an hour. Your being in the dumps, threw me into the dumps deep enough. I was distressed for your uneasiness, but still hoped what I wrote last, would prevent his coming. For I was filled with the most alarming apprehensions of your father's

travelling in this weather. I thought the froſt would ſeize his legs, and imagined I ſaw the chaiſe ſtopped in the ſnow, or overturned, and that he, incapable of helping himſelf, would be frozen to death. The meſſenger arrived more than an hour before your ſecond letter, or it would have increaſed my fears, to have been informed that he was actually upon the road. I have not felt my own weakneſs, and want of dependance upon God, more ſenſibly, a great while. But I hope, when he ſhall have brought us happily together, what we have ſuffered for each other, during theſe laſt eleven weeks, will be remembered by us with thankfulneſs, and to profit.

P. S. Your father arrived at half paſt ten, ſafe and well, as full of ſpirits as a young man, or as if he had but juſt riſen from bed. He is very well this morning, and ſo we are all; and every face about me looks more pleaſant, as we now

can

can form a reaſonable hope of ſeeing you ſoon *.

1785.

London, Hoxton, 6 Auguſt.

I LONG to hear that you had a comfortable journey to Southampton, and that you are now with our dear friends. Nothing has taken place among us that can be properly called new, which is a great mercy. For though you have been gone but one day, a ſingle day, or a ſingle hour, may produce painful alterations in

* From the above period, we were ſeldom ſeparated. And the few letters I wrote, were ſhort, and contained little that I can deem worth tranſcribing. I add the following, written after our removal to London, when the illneſs of our dear Eliza Cuningham, made a journey to Southampton neceſſary. I ſubjoin them chiefly, as a teſtimony of the Lord's goodneſs, in preſerving our affection from being diminiſhed by the increaſe of years. I believe, I was not abſent from her more than a day or two at a time, after the date of the laſt, till ſhe finiſhed her courſe.

a family.

a family. The Lord has preſerved us through a long courſe of years, and in different ſituations, from various calamities which have overtaken others. Our obligations to thankfulneſs are ſingular and numerous. When the chaiſe drove paſt the corner, my heart ſeemed to go away with it. It contained, what was of more value to me, than the cargoes of a whole Eaſt India fleet. Tell Eliza that I love her very dearly. I feel parting with you and with her; but I can cheerfully ſubmit to any thing, that may, by the Lord's bleſſing, contribute to her recovery, or relief. She would ſoon be well if I could make her ſo. But ſhe is in better hands than mine. I have a comfortable hope that her illneſs has been, and will be, ſanctified, to an end far more deſirable, than health or life itſelf. Therefore I leave her to the wiſe and merciful direction of the Lord, who, I truſt, loves her better than I can.

I cannot write a long letter to-night.

What

What could I indeed ſay, if I had more time, that I have not ſaid a thouſand times over? Yet there ſtill is, and will be, ſomething unſaid in my heart, which I have not words to expreſs. May the Lord bleſs this little ſeparation, to quicken us to mutual prayer, and to lead us to a thankful review of the mercy and goodneſs, which have followed us through the many years we have been united. How many turns have we ſeen! Under how many trials have we been ſupported! How many deliverances have we known! How many comforts have we enjoyed! Eſpecially, what great advantages have we poſſeſſed, for ſeeking and knowing the things, which pertain to our everlaſting peace! The years, we have paſſed together, will return no more. The afflictions are gone, the pleaſures likewiſe are gone, for ever. The longer we live, ſuch pleaſures as this world can afford, will, more and more, loſe their power of pleaſing. Only, our love, I truſt, will

ſubſiſt

ſubſiſt and flouriſh to the end of life, yea, beyond it. It will always be a truth, that the Lord, in giving me you, gave me the beſt temporal deſire of my heart. But the ſhadows of the evening advance. Old age is growing upon us, and the days are approaching, when we ſhall have no pleaſure, but what we can derive from the good word of God, and the conſolations of his Holy Spirit! Theſe, if we are favoured with them, will ſufficiently compenſate for the abatement, or the loſs of all the reſt. The ſtreams may run dry, but the fountain of living waters will always flow. May his preſence be near our hearts, and then all will be well!

I am too fully employed, to feel time hang heavy upon my hands, in your abſence; and if I am permitted to come to you, the thoughts of the journey's end, will make the journey pleaſant.

I THANK

Hoxton, 13 Auguſt.

I THANK the Lord and you, for the comfortable account of your arrival at Southampton, without meeting any harm by the way; and that you found our dear friends well. We entreated the Lord to take care of you, and He has heard our prayer. How often has he heard and anſwered us. Oh! that we may, at length, learn to truſt him, without anxiety. I believe, I ſhall find it difficult to procure a ſupply for my church. But if the Lord pleaſes to let me ſee my dear friends, at Southampton, while you are with them, ways and means will be found. His will muſt take place, and I ſhould be ſorry to move a ſtep without it.

I long to hear that dear Eliza has been in the water, and how it agrees with her. The Lord can give it the virtue of the pool of Bethesda. If He ſees it beſt for her on the whole, ſhe will find relief. He knows

knows what is beſt for her; I do not. But I had much rather ſee her as ſhe is, than in full health and ſpirits, if careleſs and fond of diſſipation, as is too frequently the caſe with girls at her age. To bear the yoke in youth, is not pleaſant to the fleſh; but it has often proved a bleſſing to the ſoul.

I commend you both to the Lord, and to the word of his grace; I wiſh you much of that peace which paſſeth underſtanding, particularly in this reſpect, that it has no neceſſary dependance upon outward things. If we wait upon Him, we are ſure to be remembered with the favour which He bears to his own people. We have much to be thankful for, in this life. Yet there is a thread of vanity runs through the whole of it; for He, who has done and ſuffered ſo much, for our happineſs, does not deſign, that we ſhould be quite happy here.

Hoxton, 17 Auguſt.

I THANK my dear friends for their great kindneſs to you; tell them that I ſhould be glad to be with you, to ſhare in it. But I cannot come, with propriety, at preſent. I hope Eliza will be able to bathe ſoon, and as you *are* upon the ſpot, I think you muſt wait a while. Dependance and ſubmiſſion, in the uſe of prudent means, are our parts; events are in the hand of God. It was right that you ſhould go to a proper place, whether ſhe can bathe or not, now ſhe is there; becauſe the attempt was thought adviſeable. And if bathing would be uſeful, I think ſhe will yet be able. If not, you have acted to the beſt of your judgment. What we call diſappointments, are diſpenſations, which, if rightly improved, will anſwer valuable purpoſes, and we ſhall, hereafter, ſee cauſe to be thankful for them. I am willing to think that I love

Eliza

Eliza almoſt, if not altogether, as well as you do. But there is an over anxiety attending your love, which hurts *you*, and can do *her* no good. Your reflections upon this ſubject pleaſe me. I would do, I would ſuffer much, for her advantage. But ſtill we are creatures. Our Lord God has an abſolute right to diſpoſe of us, and of ours, as He ſees fit. And as He is ſovereign, ſo He is wiſe and good. It is a great mercy to be enabled to yield to his will; for every thing, and every heart, muſt either bend, or break, before it.

What ſhall I ſay by way of cloſe? What, but breathe out the warmeſt wiſhes of my heart, to you and for you. Daily and often, I thank the Lord for giving you to me at firſt, and for ſparing you to me ſo long. How very different would the hiſtory of my life have been, if yours had not been connected with it! That my idolatrous regard had ſo happy an iſſue, and that my ſin and folly have not yet deprived me of you, are proofs of his ſingular

gular mercy to me. I have innumerable comforts to be thankful for; but my heart is ſo intimately united to you, that I ſcarcely ſeem ſuſceptive, either of pleaſure, or pain, but with ſome reference to you. Thus it was when our union commenced, and thus it has been every day ſince, to this hour. If I could ſay with confidence, that I hold you *now*, in your proper place of ſubordination, to Him who gave you to me, then I need not ſcruple to profeſs that your peace, your welfare, and your love, are dearer to me than all earthly things. The latter, I can ſay with truth; I heſitate about the former. I fear you are too much my idol ſtill. The good Lord pardon me in this thing. My choiceſt comfort has been, too often, the occaſion of ſhewing me, the evil and ingratitude of my heart, in the ſtrongeſt light. Oh! that we may both have grace to live the remainder of our days to Him! Do, my deareſt M. pray for me, pray earneſtly for me; and may He return all the

good you can aſk for me, a thouſand fold, into your own boſom!

Hoxton, 23 Auguſt.

I THANK you for your letter, and I thank the Lord that dear Eliza is able to bathe. May his bleſſing attend every means for her relief, and eſpecially, may her ſoul proſper! She and you, are daily and hourly remembered. You expreſs the very ſentiments of my heart. I am well and comfortable in the main, but there is a want of ſomething when you are abſent, which no *creature* can make up. I hope we ſhall meet to praiſe him ſoon. But, I believe, I muſt wait till after the 4th of September. I hope, I ſhall then procure a proper ſupply, for a Sunday or two. If it be the Lord's good pleaſure that I ſhall come to you, it will be made practicable.

I cannot but wiſh, with you, that we

may not be ſeparated again; but it is of more importance, to wiſh and pray, that our preſent ſeparation, may be ſanctified to us. Many things offer to amuſe us. Some deſerve, and require, a degree of our attention; but one thing is eſpecially needful. What a mercy is it, that this one thing, which mountains of gold and ſilver cannot purchaſe, is to be had, without money, and without price! May the Lord engrave it deeply on your heart and mine! His name is Love; his word is Power. As ſure as the ſun will riſe to-morrow, ſo ſure is his promiſe, that he will, in no wiſe, caſt out them that come unto him. If we have a deſire for his bleſſings, he firſt gave it us, and therefore will not diſappoint us. I long to ſee, and hear you, rejoicing in his ſalvation. He only knows the many prayers, I have offered for you: I truſt not in vain. I cannot doubt, but the one thing needful, is your chief deſire. Every thing elſe will ſhortly fail us; but the bleſſings of the goſpel will laſt,

laſt, through life, through death, and to eternity.

Hoxton, 27 Auguſt.

I LAID me down in peace, and awoke in ſafety, for the Lord ſuſtained me. He is about our path, by day, and our bed, by night, and preſerves us from innumerable evils, which would come upon us every hour, if his watchful Providence did not protect us. He is our ſure, though inviſible ſhield, therefore we are unhurt, though, in ourſelves, we are weak, and defenceleſs, like a city, without walls, or gates, and open to excurſions, from every quarter. Could we but live more ſenſible of his goodneſs, and maintain that feeling of gratitude towards him, which we do to ſome of our fellow-creatures, we ſhould be happy. For what is the great deſign of the goſpel? Is it not to introduce us into a ſtate, of the moſt honourable, and

and intereſting friendſhip, and to perpetuate to us, the pleaſure which we find, in pleaſing thoſe who are deareſt to us? The Lord Jeſus is our beſt friend: his character is ſupremely excellent, our obligations to him are inexpreſſible, our dependance upon him is abſolute, and our happineſs, in every ſenſe, is in his hands. May our love, therefore, be fixed upon him, and we ſhall do well. He will guide us with his eye, guard us by his power, and his fulneſs, and bounty, will ſupply all our wants.

As to dear Eliza, I hope I have made up my mind about her. If her recovery could be purchaſed, I think I would bid as high for it, as my ability would reach; provided it was the Lord's will. But I am ſo ſhort-ſighted, that I dare not aſk for the continuance of her life, (nor even of yours) but with a reſerve of ſubmiſſion to his wiſdom. I know not, what might be the poſſible conſequences, if I could have my own will. I know he *can* reſtore her,

and I believe he *will*, if it be for the beſt. If not, I deſire to ſubmit, or rather, to acquieſce, to be ſatisfied. I ſhall feel for myſelf, if ſhe be removed; and, probably, my feelings will be doubled, and accented, upon your account. But he can ſupport us, and ſanctify the painful diſpenſation to us both. I pray, to be enabled to entruſt, and reſign, every thing to him. This is not an eaſy leſſon to fleſh and blood; but grace can make it practicable. For the reſt, if ſhe ſhould be taken off in a moment, I have reaſon to be quite eaſy about the event, as to herſelf. And if ſhe ſhould decline gradually, I have little doubt, but the Lord will enable her to ſpeak, to the comfort, and ſatisfaction, of all about her. She is in his wiſe, and merciful hands, and there I am content to leave her.

Hoxton, 1 *September*.

It is a maxim with me, when I can hope my *intention* is right, to make myſelf as eaſy as poſſible, about conſequences. I did not apprehend, that Eliza had finally given up bathing; and Mr. T—'s kind letter confirmed my determination to viſit you. I therefore took places early in the diligence, that I might not be daily peſtered, with an anxious fear of being too late, and thereby diſappoint you. I know the way of man is not in himſelf: I believe, the Moſt High Lord condeſcends, to direct the ſteps of thoſe, who depend upon his guidance; and I am aware, that a thouſand events, unforeſeen, and unthought of, may depend upon our movements. On theſe grounds, I prayed him to direct me; and I am ſatisfied. If we come down to Southampton before you leave it, I ſhall be ready to return with you, the next morning, if you think proper. Every

thing will eaſily give way, to my attention to dear Eliza.

Though Monday is the day, on which I hope to meet our ſociety, this was not the reaſon, why I fixed to ſet off on Tueſday. I am not fond of travelling on a Monday, when I can avoid it. The thoughts of ſomething relative to the journey, might intrude, and diſcompoſe my mind, on the Lord's day, which I love to enjoy as quietly as poſſible. And, after the ſervices of that day, a good night's reſt is deſirable. I thought, if I changed my bed on Sunday evening, and roſe at four the next morning, I might not come to you ſo well, and compoſed, as I hope I ſhall on Tueſday. Otherwiſe, neither that ſociety, nor any company in the kingdom, ſhould detain me a day from you, unneceſſarily, when you expect me, and after a month's abſence. I think of our hoped-for meeting, on Tueſday next, with much the ſame anticipation of pleaſure, as when I have formerly been on the return

to

to you, from an African voyage. What difference there is, I compare to the difference between the bloſſom and the fruit. The bleſſing of the Lord, upon our connection, has, in the courſe of thirty-five years, ripened the paſſion of love, into a ſolid, and inexpreſſibly tender friendſhip; which, I truſt, in its moſt valuable properties, will ſubſiſt for ever. I ſhall never find words, fully to tell you, how much I owe you, how truly I love you, nor the one half of what my heart means, when I ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your moſt affectionate,

And obliged huſband.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

A RELATION OF SOME PARTICULARS, RESPECTING THE CAUSE, PROGRESS, AND CLOSE, OF THE LAST ILLNESS, OF MY LATE DEAR WIFE.

AMONG my readers, there will doubtleſs be ſome, of a gentle, ſympathiſing ſpirit, with whom I am not perſonally acquainted; and perhaps their feelings, may ſo far intereſt them in my concerns, as to make them not unwilling to read, a brief account of my late great trial. I ſhall allot a few pages to this purpoſe, by way of cloſe to my book, and to my hiſtory.

My dear wife had naturally a good conſtitution, and was favoured with good ſpirits, to the laſt. But the violent ſhock ſhe ſuſtained, in the year 1754, when I

was ſuddenly attacked by a fit, (I know not of what kind) which left me no ſign of life, for about an hour, but breathing, made as ſudden a change in her habit, and ſubjected her, from that time, to a variety of chronic complaints. She was ſeveral times confined, for five or ſix months, to her chamber, and often brought ſo low, that her recovery was deemed hopeleſs. I believe, ſhe ſpent ten years, out of the forty that ſhe was ſpared to me, (if all the days of her ſufferings were added together,) in illneſs, and pain. But ſhe had likewiſe long intervals of health. The fit I have mentioned (the only one I ever had) was the mean, the Lord was pleaſed to appoint, in anſwer to my prayers, to free me from the irkſome, ſea-faring life, in which I was, till then, engaged, and to appoint me a ſettlement on ſhore.

Before our removal from Liverpool, ſhe received a blow upon her left breaſt, which occaſioned her ſome pain, and anxiety, for a little time, but which ſoon wore off. A

ſmall lump remained, in the part affected, but I heard no more of it for many years. I believe that, latterly, ſhe felt more than I was aware of; but her tenderneſs for me, made her conceal it as long as poſſible. I I have often ſince wondered at her ſucceſs; and how I could be kept ſo long ignorant of it.

In the month of October, 1788, ſhe applied, unknown to me, to a friend of mine, an eminent ſurgeon. Her deſign was, if he approved it, to ſubmit to an operation, and ſo to adjuſt time and circumſtances with him, that it might be performed in my abſence, and before I could know it. But the ſurgeon told her, that the malady was too far advanced, and the tumour (the ſize of which he compared to the half of a melon) was too large, to warrant the hope of being extracted, without the moſt imminent danger of her life, and that he durſt not attempt it. He could give her but little advice, more than to keep herſelf as quiet, and her mind as eaſy,

as poſſible; and little more encouragement, than by ſaying, that the pains to which ſhe was expoſed, were generally rendered tolerable by the uſe of laudanum; to which, however, ſhe had a diſlike, little ſhort of an antipathy.

I cannot eaſily deſcribe the compoſure, and reſignation, with which ſhe gave me this recital, the next day, of her interview with the ſurgeon; nor of the ſenſations of my mind, while I heard it. My conſcience told me, that I had well deſerved to be wounded, where I was moſt ſenſible; and that it was my duty, to ſubmit with ſilence to the will of the Lord. But I ſtrongly felt, that unleſs he was pleaſed to give me this ſubmiſſion, I was more likely to toſs like a wild bull in a net, in defiance of my better judgment.

Soon after, the Lord was pleaſed to viſit our dear adopted daughter, with a dreadful fever, which, at firſt, greatly affected her nerves, and afterwards became putrid. She was brought very near to the grave indeed;

indeed; for we, once or twice, thought her actually dead. But he, who in the midſt of judgment remembers mercy, reſtored her, and ſtill preſerves her, to be the chief temporal comfort of my old age, and to afford me the greateſt alleviation of the loſs, I was ſoon to experience, that the caſe could admit.

The attention, and anxiety, occaſioned by this heavy diſpenſation, which laſted during the whole of a very ſevere winter, were by no means ſuited, to promote that tranquillity of mind, which my good friend wiſhed my dear wife would endeavour to preſerve. She was often much fatigued, and often much alarmed. Next to each other, this dear child had the neareſt place, both in her heart and mine. The effects were ſoon apparent: as the ſpring of 89 advanced, her malady rapidly increaſed; her pains were almoſt inceſſant, and often intenſe, and ſhe could ſeldom lie one hour in her bed, in the ſame po-

ſition. Oh! my heart, what didſt thou then ſuffer!

But in April, the God who heareth prayer, mercifully afforded relief; and gave ſuch a bleſſing to the means employed, that her pains ceaſed. And though I believe, ſhe never had an hour of perfect eaſe, ſhe felt little of the diſtreſſing pains, incident to her malady, from that time, to the end of her life, (which was about twenty months) excepting at three or four ſhort intervals, which, taken together, hardly amounted to two hours: and theſe returns of anguiſh, I thought, were permitted, to ſhew me, how much I was indebted to the goodneſs of God, for exempting her feelings, and my ſympathy, from what would have been terrible indeed!

In the cloſe of the ſummer, ſhe was able to go to Southampton, and returned tolerably well.

She was twice at church, in the firſt week,

week, after ſhe came home. She then went no more abroad, except in a coach, for a little air and exerciſe; but ſhe was cheerful, tolerably eaſy, ſlept as well as moſt people, who are in perfect health, and could receive, and converſe with, her kind friends, who viſited her.

It was not long after, that ſhe began to have a diſtaſte for food, which continued, and increaſed; ſo that, perhaps, her death was, at laſt, rather owing to weakneſs, from want of nouriſhment, than to her primary diſorder. Her diſlike was, firſt, to butcher's meat, of which ſhe could bear, neither the ſight, nor the ſmell. Poultry, and fiſh, in their turns, became equally diſtaſteful. She retained ſome reliſh for ſmall birds, a while after ſhe had given up the reſt; but it was at a ſeaſon, when they were difficult to be obtained. I hope, I ſhall always feel my obligations, to the kind friends, who ſpared no pains, to procure ſome for her, when they were not to be had in the markets. At that time, I ſet more value upon

a dozen

a dozen of larks, than upon the fineſt ox in Smithfield. But her appetite failed to theſe alſo, when they became more plentiful.

Under this trying diſcipline, I learnt, more ſenſibly than ever, to pity thoſe, whoſe ſufferings, of a ſimilar kind, are aggravated by poverty. Our diſtreſs was not ſmall; yet we had every thing within reach, that could, in any degree, conduce to her refreſhment, or relief; and we had faithful, and affectionate, ſervants, who were always willingly engaged to their power, yea, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, beyond their power, in attending, and aſſiſting her, by night, and by day. What muſt be the feelings of thoſe, who, when afflicted with grievous diſeaſes, pine away, unpitied, unnoticed, without help, and, in a great meaſure, deſtitute of common neceſſaries? This reflection, among others, contributed to quiet my mind, and to convince me, that I had ſtill much more cauſe for thankfulneſs, than for complaint.

For

For about a twelvemonth of her confinement, her ſpirits were good, her patience was exemplary, and there was a cheerfulneſs in her looks, and her language, that was wonderful. Often the livelineſs of her remarks, has forced a ſmile from us, when the tears were in our eyes. Whatever little contrivances ſhe formed for her amuſement, in the courſe of the day, ſhe would attend to nothing, till ſhe had finiſhed her ſtated reading of the ſcripture; in which ſhe employed much time, and great attention. I have her bible by me, (which I would not part with, for half the manuſcripts in the Vatican) in which, almoſt every principal text, from the beginning to the end of the book, is marked in the margin, with a pencil, by her own dear hand. The good word of God was her medicine, and her food, while ſhe was able to read it. She read Dr. Watts's pſalms and hymns, and the Olney hymns, in the ſame manner. There are few of them, in which one, two, or more verſes, are not thus

thus marked; and, in many, which I ſuppoſe ſhe read more frequently, every verſe is marked.

But in October, the enemy was permitted, for a while, to take advantage of her bodily weakneſs, to diſturb the peace and ſerenity of her mind. Her thoughts became clouded, and confuſed; and ſhe gradually loſt, not only the comfortable evidence, of her own intereſt, in the precious truths of the bible, but ſhe loſt all hold of the truth itſelf. She doubted the truth of the bible, or whether truth exiſted. And, together with this, ſhe expreſſed an extreme reluctance to death; and could not eaſily bear, the moſt diſtant hint of her approaching end, though we were expecting it daily, and hourly. This was the *acme*, the high water-mark of my trial; this was hard to bear indeed.

My readers, perhaps, will ſcarcely believe, that I derived ſome conſolation, during this gloomy period, from perceiving, that her attachment to me, was very ſenſibly abated.

She,

She ſpoke to me, with an indifference, of which, a little before, ſhe was incapable. If, when the Lord's preſence was withdrawn, and ſhe could derive no comfort from his word, ſhe had found ſome relief, from my being with her, or from hearing me ſpeak; I ſhould have been more grieved. Her affection to me, confirmed by ſo many proofs, in the courſe of forty years, was not to be impeached, by this temporary ſuſpenſion of its exerciſe. I judged the ſame, of the frame of her mind, as to her ſpiritual concerns: I aſcribed them both to the ſame cauſes, her bodily weakneſs, and the power of temptation. She was relieved, in both reſpects, after about a fortnight ſpent in conflict, and diſmay. The Lord reſtored peace to her ſoul, and then, her former tenderneſs to me, immediately revived. Then, likewiſe, ſhe could calmly ſpeak of her approaching diſſolution. She mentioned ſome particulars concerning her funeral, and our domeſtic concerns, with great compoſure. But her mind was not

ſo

ſo fully reſtored to its former tone, as to give her freedom to enlarge upon her hopes, and views, as I had wiſhed, till near her diſſolution; and then ſhe was too low to ſpeak at all.

One addition to our trial, yet remained. It had been her cuſtom, when ſhe went from the ſofa to her bed, to exert herſelf, for my encouragement, to ſhew me how well ſhe could walk. But it pleaſed the Lord, that, by ſome alteration, which affected her ſpine, ſhe was diſabled from moving herſelf; and other circumſtances rendered it extremely difficult to move her. It has taken five of us near two hours, to remove her from one ſide of the bed to the other, and, at times, even this was impracticable: ſo that ſhe has lain more than a week, exactly in the ſame ſpot, without the poſſibility of changing her poſition. All this was neceſſary on my account. The rod had a voice; and it was the voice of the Lord. I underſtood the meaning no leſs plainly, than if he had

ſpoken

ſpoken audibly from heaven, and ſaid, "Now contemplate your idol. Now ſee what *ſhe* is, whom you once preſumed to prefer to *Me!*" Even this bitter cup was ſweetened, by the patience, and reſignation, which he gave her. When I have ſaid, You ſuffer greatly; her anſwer uſually was, "I ſuffer, indeed, but not greatly." And ſhe often expreſſed her thankfulneſs, that though her body was immoveable, ſhe was ſtill permitted the uſe of her hands.

One of the laſt ſenſible concerns ſhe felt, reſpecting *this* world, was, when my honoured friend, patron, and benefactor, the late John Thornton, Eſq. of Clapham, was removed to a *better*. She revered, and regarded him, I believe, more than ſhe did any perſon upon earth: and ſhe had reaſon. Few, had nearer acceſs, to know, and admire, his character; and perhaps none, were under greater, if equal, obligations to him, than we. She knew of his illneſs, but was always afraid to enquire after the event; nor ſhould I have ventured

tured to inform her, but that the occaſion requiring me to leave her, for four or five hours, when I hardly expected to find her alive, at my return, I was conſtrained to give her the reaſon of my abſence. She eagerly replied, "Go by all means; I would not have you ſtay with me, upon any conſideration." I put the funeral ring I was favoured with, into her hands; ſhe put it firſt to her lips, and then to her eyes, bedewing it with her tears. I truſt they ſoon met again. But ſhe ſurvived him more than a month.

Her head became ſo affected, that I could do little more than ſit, and look at her. Our intercourſe by words was nearly broken off. She could not eaſily bear, the ſound of the gentleſt foot upon the carpet, nor of the ſofteſt voice. On Sunday, the 12th December, when I was preparing for church in the morning, ſhe ſent for me, and we took a final farewell, as to this world. She faintly uttered an endearing compellation, which was familiar to her, and

gave

gave me her hand, which I held, while I prayed by her bed-ſide. We exchanged a few tears; but I was almoſt as unable to ſpeak, as ſhe was. But I returned ſoon after, and ſaid, "If your mind, as I truſt, is in a ſtate of peace, it will be a comfort to me, if you can ſignify it by holding up your hand. She held it up, and waved it to and fro, ſeveral times.

That evening, her ſpeech, her ſight, and, I believe, her hearing, wholly failed. She continued perfectly compoſed, without taking notice of any thing, or diſcovering any ſign of pain, or uneaſineſs, till Wedneſday evening, towards ſeven o'clock. She then began to breathe very hard: her breathing might be called groaning, for it was heard in every part of the houſe; but I believe it was entirely owing to the difficulty of expiration, for ſhe lay quite ſtill, with a placid countenance, as if in a gentle ſlumber. There was no ſtart, or ſtruggle, nor a feature ruffled. I took my poſt

poſt by her bed-ſide, and watched her nearly three hours, with a candle in my hand, till I ſaw her breathe her laſt, on the 15th of December, 1790, a little before ten in the evening.

When I was ſure ſhe was gone, I took off her ring, according to her repeated injunction, and put it upon my own finger. I then kneeled down, with the ſervants who were in the room, and returned the Lord my unfeigned thanks for her deliverance, and her peaceful diſmiſſion.

How wonderful muſt be the moment after death! What a tranſition did ſhe then experience! She was inſtantly freed from ſin, and all its attendant ſorrows, and I truſt, inſtantly admitted to join the heavenly choir. That moment, was remarkable, to me, likewiſe. It removed from me, the chief object, which made another day, or hour of life, as to my own perſonal concern, deſirable. At the ſame time, it ſet me free from a weight of pain-

ful feelings, and anxieties, under which, nothing ſhort of a divine power, could have ſo long ſupported me.

I believe it was about two or three months before her death, when I was walking up and down the room, offering diſjointed prayers, from a heart torn with diſtreſs, that a thought ſuddenly ſtruck me, with unuſual force, to this effect: The promiſes of God muſt be true; ſurely the Lord will help me, *if I am willing to be helped!* It occurred to me, that we are often led, from a vain complacence in what we call our ſenſibility, to indulge that unprofitable grief, which both our duty, and our peace, require us to reſiſt, to the utmoſt of our power. I inſtantly ſaid aloud, Lord, I am helpleſs indeed, in myſelf, but I hope I am willing, without reſerve, that thou ſhouldeſt help me.

It had been much upon my mind, from the beginning of this trial, that I was a miniſter, and that the eyes of many were upon me; that my turn of preaching had

very

very much led me to endeavour to comfort the afflicted, by repreſenting the goſpel as a catholicon, affording an effectual remedy for every evil, a full compenſation for every want or loſs, to thoſe who truly receive it. So that though a believer may be afflicted, he cannot be properly unhappy; unleſs he gives way to ſelf-will, and unbelief. I had often told my hearers, that a ſtate of trial, if rightly improved, was, to the Chriſtian, a poſt of honour, affording the faireſt opportunity of exemplifying the power of divine grace, to the praiſe and glory of the giver. It had been, therefore, my frequent, daily prayer, that I might not by impatience, or deſpondence, be deprived of the advantage my ſituation afford me, of confirming, by my own practice, the doctrine which I had preached to others, and that I might not give them occaſion to apply to me, the words of Eliphaz to Job, ch. iv. 4, 5, "Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and

and thou haſt ſtrengthened the feeble knees; but now it is come unto thee, and thou fainteſt; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled!" And I had not prayed in vain. But from the time, that I ſo remarkably felt myſelf *willing to be helped*, I might truly ſay to the praiſe of the Lord, My heart truſted in Him, and I was helped indeed. Through the whole of my painful trial, I attended all my ſtated, and occaſional ſervices, as uſual; and a ſtranger would ſcarcely have diſcovered, either by my words, or looks, that I was in trouble. Many of our intimate friends were apprehenſive, that this long affliction, and eſpecially the cloſing event, would have overwhelmed me; but it was far otherwiſe. It did not prevent me from preaching a ſingle ſermon, and I preached on the day of her death.

After ſhe was gone, my willingneſs to be helped, and my deſire that the Lord's goodneſs to me, might be obſerved by

others, for their encouragement, made me indifferent to ſome laws of eſtabliſhed cuſtom, the breach of which is often more noticed, than the violation of God's commands. I was afraid of ſitting at home, and indulging myſelf, by poring over my loſs; and therefore I was ſeen in the ſtreet, and viſited ſome of my ſerious friends, the very next day. I likewiſe preached three times, while ſhe lay dead in the houſe. Some of my brethren, kindly offered their aſſiſtance; but as the Lord was pleaſed to give me ſtrength, both of body and mind, I thought it my duty to ſtand up in my place, as formerly. And after ſhe was depoſited in the vault, I preached her funeral ſermon *, with little more ſenſible emotion, than if it had been for another perſon. I have reaſon to hope that many of my hearers, were comforted, and animated under their afflictions, by what they ſaw

* From a text which I had reſerved from my firſt entrance on the miniſtry, for this particular ſervice, if I ſhould ſurvive her, and be able to ſpeak.

of the Lord's goodneſs to me, in my time of need. And I acknowledge, that it was well worth ſtanding a while in the fire, for ſuch an opportunity of experiencing, and exhibiting, the power and faithfulneſs of his promiſes.

I was not ſupported by lively, ſenſible conſolations, but by being enabled to realize to my mind, ſome great and leading truths of the word of God. I ſaw, what indeed I knew before, but never till then ſo ſtrongly and clearly perceived, that as a ſinner, I had no *right*, and as a believer, I could have no *reaſon*, to complain. I conſidered her as a loan, which He who lent her to me, had a right to reſume whenever He pleaſed; and that as I had deſerved to forfeit her every day, from the firſt; it became me, rather to be thankful that ſhe was ſpared to me ſo long, than to reſign her with reluctance, when called for. Farther, that his ſovereignty, was connected with infinite wiſdom and goodneſs; and that conſequently, if it were poſſible for

me to alter any part of his plan, I could only ſpoil it—that ſuch a ſhort-ſighted creature as I, ſo blind to the poſſible conſequences of my own wiſhes, was not only unworthy, but unable, to chooſe well for myſelf; and that it was therefore my great mercy and privilege, that the Lord condeſcended to chooſe for me. May ſuch conſiderations powerfully affect the hearts of my readers under their troubles, and then, I ſhall not regret having ſubmitted to the view of the public, a detail, which may ſeem more proper for the ſubject of a private letter to a friend. They who can feel for me, will, I hope, excuſe me. And it is chiefly for their ſakes, that I have written it.

When my wife died, the world ſeemed to die with her, (I hope, to revive no more). I ſee little now, but my miniſtry and my Chriſtian profeſſion, to make a continuance in life, for a ſingle day, deſirable; though I am willing to wait my appointed time. If the world cannot re-

ſtore *her* to me (not that I have the remoteſt wiſh that her return was poſſible) it can do nothing for me. The Bank of England, is too poor to compenſate, for ſuch a loſs as mine. But the Lord, the all-ſufficient God, ſpeaks, and it is done. Let thoſe who know him, and truſt him, be of good courage. He can give them ſtrength according to their day; He can increaſe their ſtrength, as their trials are increaſed, to any aſſignable degree. And what He *can* do, He has promiſed he *will* do. The power, and faithfulneſs, on which the ſucceſſive changes of day and night, and of the ſeaſons of the year, depend, and which uphold the ſtars in their orbits, is equally engaged to ſupport his people, and to lead them, ſafely and unhurt, (if their path be ſo appointed) through floods and flames. Though I believe ſhe has never yet been (and probably never will be) out of my waking thoughts, for five minutes at a time; though I ſleep in the bed, in which ſhe ſuffered, and lan-

guiſhed ſo long; I have not had one uncomfortable day, nor one reſtleſs night, ſince ſhe left me. I have loſt a right hand, which I cannot but miſs continually, but the Lord enables me to go on, cheerfully, without it.

May his bleſſing reſt upon the reader! May glory, honour, and praiſe be aſcribed to his great and holy name, now and for ever! Amen.

No.

No. II.

VERSES SUNG AFTER HER FUNERAL SERMON.

HABAK. iii. 17, 18.

Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat; the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtall: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.

1 THE earth with rich abundance ſtor'd
To anſwer all our wants,
Invites our hearts to praiſe the Lord,
For what his bounty grants.

2 Flocks, herds, and corn, and grateful fruit,
His gracious hand ſupplies;
And while our various taſtes they ſuit,
Their proſpect cheers our eyes.

3 To theſe, He adds each tender tie
Of ſweet domeſtic life;
Endearing joys, the names imply
Of parent, huſband, wife!

4 But ſin has poiſon'd all below,
Our bleſſings, burdens prove;
On ev'ry hand we ſuffer woe,
But moſt, where moſt we love.

5 Nor vintage, harveſt, flocks, nor herds,
Can fill the heart's deſire;
And oft a worm deſtroys our gourds,
And all our hopes expire.

6 Domeſtic joys, alas! how rare!
Poſſeſs'd, and known by few!
And they who know them, find they are
As frail, and tranſient too.

7 But you, who love the Saviour's voice,
And reſt upon his name;
Amidſt theſe changes may rejoice,
For he is ſtill the ſame.

8 The Lord himſelf will ſoon appear,
Whom you, unſeen, adore;
Then He will wipe off ev'ry tear,
And you ſhall weep no more.

No. III.

EBENEZER:

A MEMORIAL

OF THE UNCHANGEABLE GOODNESS OF GOD, UNDER CHANGING DISPENSATIONS.

No. 1.

WRITTEN ON FEB. 12, 1775.

The Twenty-fifth Anniverſary of our Marriage.

THE LORD GAVE—

1 For what this day recals to mind
My praiſe to God is due;
How many bleſſings he deſign'd
To give, in giving You.

2 When hateful, hating and forlorn
In Afric's Wilds I ſtray'd;
His hand ſecur'd my ſafe return,
But *You*, the *Mean*, was made.

3 How little, then, could be foreſeen
My path in future life!
But he prepar'd each following ſcene,
By making You, my Wife.

4 The happy day that join'd our hands
(Sweet prelude to his Grace)
More firm, in my remembrance, ſtands
Than if engrav'd in braſs.

5 But ah! My heart, by ſin betray'd,
(How painful is the thought)
Soon, of the Gift, an Idol made,
The Giver ſoon forgot!

6 How juſtly, might ſome ſudden turn
Have parted us again;
And left my guilty ſoul to mourn
In agony and pain!

7 But though we both, and chiefly I,
For Good have render'd Ill,
His mercy hath been always nigh,
His hand preſerves us ſtill.

8 With mutual love, and peace, and health,
And friends, We have been bleſt;
And, if not, what the World calls, *Wealth*,
We have *Enough* poſſeſs'd.

9 From place to place, from year to year,
The Lord has been our Guide;
Our ſure reſource in time of fear,
When all has fail'd beſide.

10 Thus

10 Thus five and twenty years, the ſun
Has trod his annual path;
And we apace are poſting on
To meet the ſtroke of death!

11 Sure, none a happier life have known,
Than ours, thus far, has been;
But could we covet, now 'tis gone,
To live it o'er again?

12 Like checker'd Cloth, the Warp with love
And comfort has been ſpread;
But Cares and Croſſes interwove
Have furniſh'd half the thread.

13 Yes! Even We, who ſo much joy,
So much endearment know,
Have found that ſomething will annoy,
And tarniſh all below!

14 Yet ev'ry Croſs a Mercy is,
A Bleſſing ev'ry Thorn,
That tells us, Here is not our bliſs,
We were for nobler born.

15 That I am Hers, and She is Mine,
Invites my feeble lays;
But, Saviour, that we Both are Thine,
Demands my higheſt praiſe.

16 With Thee, dear Lord, who ruleſt All,
The wiſe appointment lies,
To which of us the lot muſt fall,
To cloſe the other's eyes!

17 Then all our intercourſe while here,
(How happy, and how kind!)
Will like a fleeting dream appear,
Which leaves no trace behind.

18 Prepare us, ev'ry day we live,
For that important hour;
And when, at length, it ſhall arrive,
Support us by thy pow'r.

19 Who firſt departs, may Thy kind ſmile
Strengthen, with joy to go;
And the Survivor reconcile
To ſtay a while below.

20 Then, may it ſeem of little weight,
Which of us goes before;
Aſſur'd that we ſhall ſhortly meet
To part again no more.

21 Oh, with what wonder, joy, and praiſe
Our ſouls ſhall then review
The ſnares, and mercies of the ways,
We were conducted thro'!

No. 2.

WRITTEN ON DEC. 15, 1791.

The First Anniversary of her Dismission from this State of Sin and Sorrow.

—THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY. BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort! Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comforts wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

1 LORD! She was thine, and not my own,
Thou hast not done me wrong;
I thank Thee for the precious loan
Afforded me so long.

2 For though no single day has been,
Or talent, well improv'd;
I chiefly see, and mourn, my sin
In what I chiefly lov'd.

3 I trembled,

3 I trembled, when Thou ſaidſt, "Reſign
A much-abuſed truſt;"
But could not wonder, or repine;
I own'd the ſentence juſt.

4 Yet mercy ſweeten'd my diſtreſs;
And, while I felt the rod,
Gave me abundant cauſe to bleſs
An All-ſufficient God!

5 Sharp was my pain, and deep my wound;
(A wound which ſtill muſt bleed)
But daily help, and ſtrength I found
Proportion'd to my need.

6 Like Jonah (well our ſtories ſuit)
I view'd my gourd, well pleas'd;
Like him, I could not ſee the root
On which the worm had ſeiz'd.

7 But ſaw, at length, the hour draw nigh,
(That hour I ſince have known)
When all my earthly joy muſt die,
And I be left alone.

8 She dropp'd a tear, and graſp'd my hand,
And fain ſhe would have ſpoke;
But well my heart could underſtand
The language of her look.

9 Farewell,

9 Farewell, it meant, a laſt Adieu!
I ſoon ſhall ceaſe from pain;
This ſilent tear I drop for you:
We part—to meet again.

10 I ſaid, "If leaving all below,
You now have peace divine;
And would, but cannot, tell me ſo,
Give me, at leaſt, a ſign."

11 She rais'd, and gently wav'd her hand,
And fill'd me with a joy,
To which the wealth of Sea and Land
Compar'd, were but a Toy.

12 I truſt, indeed, ſhe knew thy grace
Before this trying day;
But Satan had, a while, acceſs,
To fill her with diſmay.

13 Till then, tho' two long years ſhe pin'd,
Without an hour of eaſe;
Cheerful ſhe ſtill appear'd, reſign'd,
And bore her croſs, in peace.

14 Daily, while able, cloſely too,
She read the word of God;
And thence her hope and comfort drew,
Her Med'cine and her Food.

15 A ſtranger

15 A ſtranger might have well preſum'd,
From what he ſaw her bear;
This burning buſh was not conſum'd,
Becauſe the *Lord* was there.

16 Three days, ſhe could no notice take,
Nor ſpeak, nor hear, nor ſee;
O Lord! Did not my heart-ſtrings ache?
Did not I cry to Thee?

17 That while I watch'd her, night and day,
My will, to Thine, might bow?
And, by this Rod, didſt Thou not ſay,
" Behold your Idol now!

18 " From her you lov'd too much, proceed
" Your ſharpeſt grief and pains;
" For, ſoon or late, the heart muſt bleed
" That Idols entertains."

19 Yes, Lord, we both have guilty been,
And juſtly are diſtreſs'd;
But ſince Thou doſt forgive our ſin,
I welcome all the reſt.

20 Only uphold us in the fire,
Our fainting ſpirits cheer;
And I thy Mercy will admire
When moſt thou ſeem'ſt ſevere.

21 Fainter,

21 Fainter, her breath, and fainter grew,
Until ſhe breath'd her laſt:
The Soul was gone, before we knew
The ſtroke of death was paſt.

22 Soft was the moment, and ſerene,
That all her ſuff'rings clos'd;
No agony, or ſtruggle ſeen,
No feature diſcompos'd.

23 The parting ſtruggle all was mine;
"'Tis the Survivor dies:"
For ſhe was freed, and gone to join
The Triumph of the Skies.

24 To me, it was a ſtormy day,
Tho' glad for her releaſe;
But He, whom ſeas and ſtorms obey,
Soon bid the Tempeſt ceaſe.

25 My ſelfiſh heart had wiſh'd her here,
To ſpend her days in pain;
That ſhe, what I could ſay, might hear,
And ſpeak to me again.

26 Our kindneſs to our ſuff'ring friends
Would keep them ſtill below;
But He, who loves them better, ſends,
And at his call, They go.

27 Each

27 Each moment, ſince that trying hour,
My loſs I keenly feel;
But truſt, I feel my Saviour's pow'r
To ſanctify, and heal.

28 Ah, World! Vain World! By whom my Lord
Was crucify'd and ſlain;
What comfort now, canſt thou afford
To mitigate my pain?

29 Long ſince, I ſhould, by his dear Croſs,
Have learnt to die to Thee;
But if I learn it by my Loſs,
That Loſs my Gain will be.

30 Now, Lord, to Thee I would apply,
On Thee, alone, depend;
Thou art, when creatures fail and die,
An ever-living Friend!

31 Now thou haſt made a Void within,
Which only Thou canſt fill;
Oh! grant me pardon of my ſin,
And Grace to do thy Will.

32 That I with joy thy flock may feed,
A pattern to them be,
And comfort them, in time of need;
Vouchſafe to comfort me.

33 Let

33 Let me believe, and love and praiſe,
And wonder and adore,
And view Thee guiding all my ways;
I aſk for nothing more.

34 To Thee I would commit the reſt:
The When, the How, the Where,
Thy Wiſdom will determine beſt,
Without my anxious care.

35 May I, with faith and patience, wait,
For ſoon thy call will come;
When I ſhall change this Mortal State
For an Eternal Home.

36 The vails of Sin and Unbelief
Shall then be rent in twain;
And they, who parted here with grief,
Shall meet, with joy, again.

37 Then will the Lord himſelf appear,
With all his blood-bought ſheep,
To wipe, from ev'ry face, the tear,
And they no more ſhall weep.

38 May thoughts, like theſe, relieve my toil,
And cheer my ſpirit up!
Who would not ſuffer here awhile,
For ſuch a glorious hope?

No. IV.

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE 15TH DECEMBER, 1790.

1 WHILE Grace her balm, to ſooth my pain
And heal my wound, applies;
To make it throb, and bleed again,
Officious Mem'ry tries.
Too well ſhe knows each tender ſtring
That twines about my heart;
And how to fix a piercing ſting
In the moſt feeling part!

2 May I not yet, ſome reſpite take
From dwelling on her death?
Did I not feel her heart-ſtrings break,
And watch her laſt-drawn breath?
Oh! ceaſe, at length to haunt my mind
With images of grief;
Canſt thou no pleaſing topics find
To yield me ſome relief?

3 But

3 But as a ſieve the bran retains,
And lets the flour fall thro',
So careful mem'ry keeps my pains,
And loſs, in conſtant view;
While comforts, countleſs as the ſands,
Which crown my favour'd lot,
Tho' each, my warmeſt praiſe demands,
Are heedleſsly forgot.

4 And can I then forget the times,
When helpleſs, hopeleſs, loſt,
I pin'd, in miſeries and crimes,
On Afric's horrid coaſt?
To Chriſt my Lord, a daring foe,
To men, a wretched ſlave;
Yet, on that brink of endleſs woe
He ſhew'd his pow'r to ſave.

5 His mercy, tho' by me unſought,
Kept me from falling in;
His arm my full deliv'rance wrought,
His grace forgave my ſin.
He taught my baſe blaſpheming tongue
To aim at pray'r and praiſe;
Became my ſhield, and ſtrength, and ſong,
And guided all my ways.

6 Thus

6 Thus freed from misery and death,
My sorrow chang'd to joy;
He sent me forth to preach the faith
I labour'd to destroy.
His mercies thro' my future life
Were new from day to day;
The chief of all, was that dear wife
He since has call'd away.

7 Shall one so favour'd e'er repine?
Or one so vile complain?
No—let me praise—she long was mine,
And shall be mine again.
If death could break our union past,
(Frail, tho' endear'd the tie)
The stronger band of Grace shall last,
When Death itself shall die!

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THE END.